

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2018



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S BUDGET SETTING FOR 2019/2020

On 14 November, Suffolk County Council published key papers which mark the beginning of a three-month process to agree Suffolk County Council's budget for 2019/20. The papers detail how Suffolk County Council proposes to increase its overall budget by nearly £15 million (3%) to £514.8 million in 2019/20, with specific increases in the council's children and young people and adult care budgets which support Suffolk's most vulnerable people. This includes accounting for an expected significant increase in the cost of providing services and inflation.

The council is also looking to maximise the financial contribution from ten long-term programmes which focus on transforming how the council delivers its services and works with other authorities and public service partners. The papers also summarise an initial list of potential savings totalling £11.2 million, which are required to help balance the overall budget. These include proposals to maximise income, as well as cost, grant, service and staffing reductions. To balance its budget for the next financial year, the council needs to save around £25m.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Richard Smith, said:

"We have some really tough calls to make if we are to balance the budget in the next financial year and in years beyond. There are no easy options left. What can be in no doubt is that this council remains absolutely committed to supporting the most vulnerable young people and older residents across Suffolk. In fact, we are actually planning to spend more in these crucial services next year as demand for these services increases year-on-year."

On 22 November, the council's Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the budget papers. The purpose of the Scrutiny Committee is to review how the budget process is carried out, provide challenge, and monitor the progress being made towards setting a balanced budget for next year. Not all county councils adopt this level of overview.

The views of Scrutiny form part of the considerations given to making the final budget proposal alongside the views of council officers, businesses, public sector partners and the feedback from the annual budget consultation that ended on Friday 16 November. This year, nearly 1200 residents gave their views on the service areas that they feel are important to them.

Based on the discussions held at the Scrutiny Committee, Suffolk County Council has revised one of its initial budget proposals for 2019/2020.

On Wednesday 28 November, it was announced that, after careful consideration, the nine Citizens Advice Bureaus in Suffolk will not face a complete withdrawal of their funding from council in 2019/20. Instead, the proposal sees a phased reduction in funding over a longer time period. The proposed adjustment gives them an additional 12 months to plan ahead and develop ideas for alternative funding sources. Suffolk County Council's external funding team will also conduct a training session for the nine CABs to help them explore new funding opportunities. Suffolk County Council will not know the full extent of its grant from central government until 6 December at the earliest. After that, the budget proposals will be finalised and then agreed in public at the Cabinet meeting in January 2019 and the Council meeting in February 2019.

• SUFFOLK PROPOSALS FOR UP TO £10M OF JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS IN SUDBURY

A multi-million pound programme to upgrade busy road junctions in Sudbury is being considered by Suffolk County Council, as part of its works to ease traffic congestion in the town. In spring 2018, Suffolk County Council commissioned independent experts from WSP to look at options to relieve traffic congestion in and around Sudbury. Schemes considered included a western or southern bypass, changes to parking and public transport and junction improvements.

That detailed and technical work is now nearing completion, and the county council has been advised by WSP that the junction works will be the most cost-effective way of relieving traffic congestion.

Whilst the option of a building bypass would provide a lot of benefits to the town, the cost at between £50m to £70m is prohibitively high, resulting in a low benefit cost ratio. This option will therefore not be taken forward at this time, with junction improvements being looked at in more detail. WSP were asked to look at existing traffic conditions in the town and the problems that needed solving. The options were then assessed against the scheme objectives, as well as other factors, such as scale of impact, deliverability and effect on the environment.

Junction improvements on up to five key junctions in the town will provide a more cost-effective solution for the town by improving traffic flows.

The junctions proposed for development are:

- A134 / A131 / B1064
- A134 / B1115
- A134 / Newton Road / Shawlands Avenue
- A131 / Newton Road / Cornard Road / Great Eastern Road (Bell Vue Junction)
- A131 Ballingdon Hill / Bulmer Road.

The council will now work with WSP to design junction improvements in more detail and model what the junction improvements could achieve, as well as assessing whether other complementary measures, such as improvements for walking and cycling, would provide additional benefits. The council will also look to secure a source of funding for this work.

Suffolk County Council will continue to work closely with the community stakeholder forum which includes elected representatives of local organisations such as Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council, Essex County Council, Sudbury town council and nearby parish councils.

• SUFFOLK'S MOST ACTIVE COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

On 7 November, it was announced that Clare, Brantham, and Hintlesham and Chattisham have scooped the honours in this year's Suffolk's Most Active Community Awards. The awards, now in their fifth year, are organised by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Association of Local Councils. Their purpose is to recognise and celebrate communities in Suffolk that are going the extra mile to encourage their residents to be active.

Hintlesham and Chattisham, which has a population of just 778 people, triumphed in the small village category, for villages of less than 1,000 people. The judges were particularly impressed with their achievement in raising £117,000 to provide an all-weather floodlit Multi-Use Games Area giving residents free access to tennis, hockey, five-a-side football and netball.

Scooping the large village title this year was Brantham. Judges pinpointed the extensive range and selection of opportunities available in the village for their success. The varied activities available include Zumba and Irish dancing classes in the village hall, a new trim trail and annual 5-mile run, regular local walking groups, a social cycling group, and formal cricket, bowls and football clubs, the latter boasting 11 junior teams.

Clare was victorious in the Most Active Town category. Judges pointed to three recent developments as being key to their success in the competition – the establishment of parkrun, which attracts between 100 and 130 runners every week, gaining national ‘Walkers are Welcome’ accreditation, and opening-up of the local school swimming pool to the community. Sudbury were also highly commended in the Most Active Town category.

- **SUFFOLK WINS PRAISE AT THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY ENERGY AWARDS 2018**

On 5 November, it was announced that the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership has received a national award for supporting local communities to be more energy efficient. An expert panel of judges awarded the Local Authority Award to the Partnership for its close working with local organisations. This includes exploring how organisations can be more energy efficient, helping to source funding, producing a community energy toolkit, providing technical support and investing in energy efficiency installations. In addition, over 120 community buildings have received in-depth advice and support to be more energy efficient.

The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership is a collaboration of Suffolk County Council, all Suffolk’s borough and district councils and The Environment Agency. It supports the county’s communities, businesses and residents to reduce carbon emissions, realise the economic benefits of reducing energy consumption and adapt to the future impacts of climate change. Its work has brought in significant amounts of external funding to Suffolk, running highly-successful projects for its customers.

- **‘THE HOLD’ CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY**

Construction of The Hold building is well underway, with groundworks, piling, and foundations all part of this phase of construction. The Hold will deliver a new home for the majority of Suffolk’s unique archival collections, as well as state-of-the-art public facilities including seminar rooms and a 200-seat auditorium.

The new building, which will be situated near the junction of Fore Street and Grimwade Street in Ipswich, will be part of the University of Suffolk campus and will be run by the county and the university together. Work began on the construction of The Hold building in August, with the demolition of a derelict building at the northern end of the site. The construction will focus on the strongrooms first, where the archives will be kept. The building will formally open to the public in Spring 2020. Once finished, more than 100 direct and indirect full-time jobs will be created as well as training and apprenticeships.

- **HAVE YOU SPOTTED THE NEW SUFFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE VEHICLE ON THE ROAD?**



Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has a new-look vehicle taking to the roads of Suffolk.

The fire appliance used to train its drivers has been wrapped in new graphics, showing the fire service’s commitment to being open and accessible to everyone. It is keen to share the message that there are career opportunities in the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service for all.

It does not matter what your background is or where you live, you can pursue a career with the service.

Being a member of the team does not only involve being called to put out fires, firefighters attend

many other emergencies such as dealing with chemical spillages, rescuing animals or supporting emergency service colleagues at road traffic collisions. The service also invests a lot of time in ensuring accidents do not happen in the first place. Their prevention work and involves going into schools, working with local businesses and communities.

The service also has non-operational staff who maintain their vehicles, uniforms and equipment, manage their IT and provide crucial administration support. Vacancies with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service are published on www.suffolkjobsdirect.org.

On call firefighters are constantly being recruited and recruitment for full time firefighters is expected to take place again in 2019. For more information, search for Suffolk Fire and Rescue on www.suffolk.gov.uk.

- **A USEFUL LINK TO SHARE WITH RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS**

‘Can Do Health and Care’ is about local health and care services working in a more joined up way. Health, care, voluntary and community organisations in Suffolk and North East Essex are working together with a shared vision and plans to improve the health and care outcomes for the one million people living locally.

Their newsletter keeps local residents and community groups up to date with some of their key projects and news and can be accessed at <http://www.candohealthandcare.co.uk/news/edition-3/>.

Some highlights from their latest newsletter are:

- The launch of a suicide prevention app in Suffolk.
- A new group to support people in East and Central Suffolk who are caring for loved ones with mental health conditions.
- A community café that has opened in Rougham as part of a village initiative designed to combat loneliness and isolation.

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

May I wish you a very Happy Christmas!

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

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