

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2021

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



• **PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED FOR NEW RECYCLING CENTRE IN HAVERHILL**

On November 3rd Plans to build a new recycling centre in Haverhill were approved. Suffolk County Council and its partner FCC Environment, which manages all of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres, are to relocate the Chalkstone Way Recycling Centre to a new site within FCC's Waste Transfer Station at Homefield Road.

Permission has been granted by county council planners for the new recycling centre, together with the granting of an environmental permit, which will eventually replace the current centre in Chalkstone Way.

Construction for the new site is currently out to tender, with work anticipated to start this winter and opening expected to be during 2022.

The site will feature a modern split-level recycling centre designed to make access for residents easier and to maximize the recycling of household waste.

The benefits of this scheme will be:

- A new, purpose-designed recycling centre
- A raised mezzanine platform to provide customers with an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste - removing the need for steps
- An easy-to-use layout allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- Reduced queuing on the highway
- Removing the need to close the facility to service the containers
- Improving accessibility and increasing capacity
- Introducing greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles
- A covered facility

The new design will provide queuing capacity within the site and improved access from the public highway compared to the Chalkstone Way site.

The raised level construction will improve access to the containers for site users by removing the need for stairs. It also means containers can continue to be emptied without the need to close the site.

The replacement recycling centre will overcome increasing demand at Chalkstone Way and meet the needs created by forecasted housing growth in the area.

The waste transfer station – which takes waste collected locally and prepares it for either disposal or recycling – will continue to operate at Homefield Road.

• **CLIMATE CHANGE: WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH THE CHANGES WE ADOPT**

November 3rd, an article by Councillor Richard Rout.

Climate change is coming into sharp focus on a global scale this week, as the two-week COP26 conference gets underway.

This is the United Nations conference on climate change, with the eyes of the world looking to our countries' leaders to take some bold action. Action to reduce carbon emissions around the globe, action to reduce the use of fossil fuels and action to slow the rate that our planet is heating up.

Many agree the time for talking is truly in the past – this is a climate emergency, as Suffolk County Council recognised in March 2019 – now is the time for action. Some Presidents and leaders may be conspicuous by their absence, but I hope that doesn't stop those in attendance from making commitments and taking immediate action.

The outcomes of the conference will undoubtedly affect our daily lives, both personally and professionally.

In Suffolk, local authorities have come together and set the ambitious target of being Net Zero by 2030. Collectively, we have made this commitment tangible in the form of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan.

The Plan has specific goals and priorities across five areas: Collaborative action, Sustainable homes, Low carbon transport, Industrial and commercial energy use, and Cleaner power. This means that colleagues across the county are pulling in the same direction, with the same goals, and the same vision. Each organisation can make big changes on their own, but together the difference will be much greater.

The same is true for you and me, in our homes. We can, and will, make a difference with the changes we adopt. I'm sure like you, my heart does sink a little when I see various national leaders have announced that they are not attending COP26 in person. It can be easy for us to roll over and think "if they're not committed to this, then what difference am I going to make?"

But for me, that's a reason to do even more and try even harder. The UK won't be successful with its ambitions if counties like Suffolk don't try. And Suffolk won't be successful if you and I don't try. Whether they are changes you make at home, or challenge your employer or business to look at how it can reduce the amount of energy it uses and the carbon it emits.

We want to celebrate these people that are making a difference and who inspire us – and that is exactly what we are doing with the Greenest County Awards 2021. The awards ceremony will take place on 12 November, and I'm delighted to say that we've had a flood of nominations. There are some fantastic people and businesses who have been put forward that I'm aware of, but excitingly a whole raft of entries that I've not come across before.

This shows to me that so many people in Suffolk have been committed for a long time, to looking at how they can reduce their carbon emissions, and ultimately contribute to tackling climate change. I've been blown away by some of the businesses who have shared our commitment to be Net Zero by 2030 and have plans for the next decade about how they are going to achieve this.

• **GOVERNMENT FUNDING BOOST FOR SUFFOLK COMMUNITY SCHEMES**

On November 5th, two Suffolk schemes received Government funding totalling more than £940,000. Enabling Self-Employment in Suffolk and the Suffolk Road to Net Zero business support programme are among 477 schemes across the country to receive backing from the Community Renewal Fund. This is a £200 million pot set up by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities aimed at boosting skills training for the unemployed and investing in businesses developing low-carbon technology.

The two Suffolk schemes, which are both being led by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and which were put forward by Suffolk County Council, receive a total of £945,974.

Enabling Self-Employment, which receives £412,208, delivers self-employment support across Suffolk, particularly amongst disadvantaged communities in East Suffolk.

Building on the established programme of Business Start-Up support in Norfolk and Suffolk, it works with employed and unemployed people – including those who were on furlough or who are under-employed and economically vulnerable – from deprived groups and communities.

Suffolk Road to Net Zero receives £533,766.

This is a scheme offering grants to support businesses in developing low-carbon projects and which contribute to the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan's key theme of reducing industrial and commercial emissions, informs a model for place-based Net Zero strategies, and generates benefits for nature-based solutions.

• **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTING £12.8M TO DECARBONISE ITS BUILDINGS**

It was announced on November 9th that properties, including fire stations and libraries, will receive investment as the council continues to drive its ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. Suffolk County Council will be committing £12.8m towards reducing the carbon produced by buildings in its corporate estate.

Cabinet members today (9 November 2021) approved a report to commit to this investment, as well as implementing the SCC Energy Management Strategy, as recommended by the Climate Emergency Policy Development Panel.

This latest investment will also work towards reducing energy consumption across the council's buildings to mitigate the effects of increasing energy prices and associated costs.

Through the Energy Management Strategy, the council will target how it can be 'smarter' with its buildings by reducing electricity consumption, reviewing the heating and cooling of its buildings, continuing its LED lighting rollout, replacing older fossil fuel boilers and generating its own energy.

- **WE CAN ALL DO OUR BIT AS PRESSURE ON HOSPITALS REACHES CRITICAL LEVELS**

November 12th, an article by Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council.

I hope many of you were able to celebrate Bonfire Night over the weekend. What struck me, as I enjoyed being with friends, was how much we had missed last year. Guy Fawkes' celebrations certainly felt extra special and worthwhile, knowing that we had lived with very few social occasions in 2020. I am now looking forward to spending Christmas with my family.

What also struck me this weekend was how I now subconsciously accept and live with Covid in a safe and measured way. The virus is still in our communities – and as a result Suffolk is now an Enhanced Response Area. But I am happy and comfortable to live with small measures in my life to keep myself and others safe. This may mean I wear a mask in a crowded place, or I crack open a window when a neighbour calls round. These small acts are worth it so I can enjoy lunching with friends or going into the office.

A new campaign has been launched by the Suffolk Resilience Forum which addresses just this. It's called What's It Worth and it aims to get people to consider what small acts they can do now to keep safe and enjoying the things they love the most. It asks people what motivates them to follow the actions that best reduces the spread of Covid and other viruses this winter.

We all know what keeps us safe – we have lived with such measures for more than 18 months. However, with Covid rates high in Suffolk we all need a little reminder from time to time. Working with public health and Government colleagues, the campaign promotes five familiar key actions which we call can do:

- Get fully vaccinated and have 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.

We know that not everyone can follow all the guidance, such as those who can't wear face coverings, but that's ok. It all helps. You will probably see or hear some of the campaign, with features the fictional Garnham family, over the winter. This campaign was launched as Suffolk entered week two of being in an Enhanced Response Area. This means that the Government is providing extra resources to help fight Covid in the county.

Whilst we have seen cases fall this week, pressure on Suffolk's hospitals are reaching critical levels due to more people needing treatment. This support includes help with the vaccination effort by extending opening hours and creating pop up vaccination clinics within our communities. This will be rolled out in some wards in Ipswich over the new few weekends. It also include help to reduce transmission in schools, where we have seen a substantial cases, with increased testing and additional temporary powers and also funding for Covid awareness raising communications and advertising.

I want to be clear that this 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 2020. Instead, it will boost the county's ability to raise awareness, tackle outbreaks and encourage people to get vaccinated. This approach has already been used in other parts of the country to help reduce the rate of transmission and is also being taken in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at the same time.

I very much welcome this additional help and funding from the Government. There has been considerable effort to get more people vaccinated and to slow the spread, but we find ourselves with worryingly high rates.

Throughout the pandemic, Suffolk has been effective at keeping our COVID rates low compared to other parts of the country. This is because we have worked hard and been proactive at every stage.

The situation facing Suffolk now calls for the same forward-thinking and preventative work to protect residents, businesses and our way of life. As we learn to live with Covid, it will be actions such as this that prevent Covid from having an even worse impact and, ultimately, holding back our recovery.

• **LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION OVER HOUSING SCHEME FOR MILDENHALL**

On November 16th, a public consultation into proposals by Suffolk County Council to build a new community of more than 1,000 homes to the west of Mildenhall was launched. The site comprises 83 hectares of arable land, adjacent to the Mildenhall hub with the B1102 West Row Road through its centre, along the western edge of the town. The county council is the majority landowner.

The new community would include up to 1,300 houses - with 30% classed as affordable - parks, a new primary school, a new local centre and an area for jobs, and an 80-bed supported living adult care facility, plus 10 hectares of open space.

The development would incorporate environmental measures such as a pedestrian and cycle-friendly urban design and layout to encourage non-car use, new connections to public transport, and wildlife-friendly corridors.

Houses would be built to the government's Future Homes-standard using low carbon heating systems and renewable energy sources, with infrastructure for electrical vehicle charging and water efficiency measures.

The site is bounded by an existing industrial estate to its north, the existing urban boundary of Mildenhall to its east, the River Lark and Mildenhall Hub to its south, and designated countryside to its west.

The site has been previously allocated for mixed-use development of housing, employment, schools, shops, open spaces and recreation within the adopted Local Plan for West Suffolk Council.

The latest consultation has been launched after West Suffolk Council last week approved Suffolk County Council's Masterplan for the site.

A previous consultation was held at the start of 2021 to help shape the initial Masterplan. This further consultation is to help establish views on the revised Masterplan and will run until January 10, 2022.

For more details of the proposed scheme, and to leave comments, go to the [Suffolk County Council Land west of Mildenhall website](#). **All comments must be received by 4pm on Monday January 10, 2022.**

A public exhibition will be held on December 2 at the Mildenhall Hub from 2pm-8pm. A booking system will be in place with 30-minute slots, which [can be booked via the website](#).

• **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON FUTURE COUNCIL SERVICES IN THE 2022/23 BUDGET**

On November 19th a public consultation was launched to find out where people place their priorities and thoughts on how council funds its services. Following the Chancellor's recent Spending Review and Autumn Budget, Suffolk County Council will have the option to raise Council Tax by 2% and the Adult Social Care Precept by 2%. With local authorities continuing to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, global supply chain issues and climate change, Suffolk County Council is asking residents for their thoughts on helping the council prioritise its funding towards services in the coming financial year alongside meeting the continuing costs of statutory care services.

Although the last two years have proved to be an extraordinary time, the county council continues to aim to provide the best possible outcomes for local people through a multitude of frontline services that support residents, businesses, and the county at large.

With rising costs and increasing service demand year on year, the finances at our disposal have to be carefully planned and considered for us to continue to achieve a balanced budget each year in extremely challenging circumstances.

Suffolk County Council's priorities this year are to:

- promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
- strengthen our local economy
- protect and enhance our environment
- provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer

With careful financial management and planning, the county council has already saved hundreds of millions of pounds during the last decade, whilst being innovative in the delivery of many of its services. Many challenges remain in the light of the recent pandemic, and the continuing difficult financial position that many local authorities have faced for a number of years.

[More information about the council's finances and the consultation can be found at suffolk.gov.uk/budget2022](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/budget2022)

The consultation closes on Monday 20 December 2021.

• **SEARCH IS ON FOR WAREHOUSE SPACE TO AID FOODBANKS IN SUFFOLK**

It was announced on November 25th that the council is urgently appealing for available warehouse space near to Ipswich to help provide supplies for the county's foodbanks and local charities.

Ipswich based charity FareShare East of England urgently need to find new facilities to ensure they can store and distribute vital food for Suffolk's foodbanks. The charity is currently supported by a depot in Nottingham via trips to Cambridge, but this is not sustainable in the long-term for serving charities and community groups in Suffolk.

Anyone who owns and has spare storage facilities could be able to help preserve some of the vital food that Suffolk's most vulnerable residents need. FareShare East of England is looking at sites that meet the following criteria:

- In or in very close proximity to Ipswich
- Building in –in the region of 10,000 square feet
- Buildings with height for racking of 6-7 meters
- Must have access for articulated lorries
- Office space for six people/workstations
- 415 voltage supply to building for refrigerators etc.

FareShare East of England is looking for a building on a formal rental basis for a 5-year term rent at a rate of £5 to £10 per square foot but would also look at a 10-year term on the same rate, with a 5-year break clause.

As of February 2021, there were over 2,000 foodbanks in the UK, that are working hard to help feed our nation and Suffolk County Council is proud to be supporting foodbanks throughout Suffolk.

FareShare East of England is part of the UK-wide FareShare network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations. In 2020/21 FareShare East of England supported nearly 150 local charities and community groups and provided them with the equivalent of nearly four million meals. Due to the current lack of facilities they are currently only able to provide a reduced service to their member charities and community groups. To do this they rely on volunteers to carry out their work and many of the volunteers are based in Ipswich which is why a site in the town is being sought after.

To offer a site please contact Regional Manager Mike Barrett, FareShare East of England via email on: michael.barrett@fareshare.org.uk

Wishing you all a restful Christmas, and thank you for all your hard work in 2021.

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

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