

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2019



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• SUFFOLK SCHOOLS GET IMPROVED RESULTS

Self-reported results from Suffolk schools, released on 22 August, indicate an increase in students achieving higher grades. This includes a 4% increase in pupils achieving at least a grade 5 in all elements of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and a 7% increase in the number of students achieving a grade 4, when compared with the previous year. The English Baccalaureate constitutes GCSEs in English and Maths plus GCSEs from the Sciences, Humanities and Languages. This is seen by the government as an important academic foundation for all pupils.

The self-reported figures also show an increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 4 in English and Maths. There has also been a 2-point increase in the attainment 8 figure for disadvantage pupils, which is likely to see disadvantage students exceed the national average when provisional results are released in October. Attainment 8 takes into account a pupil's overall results across a range of GCSEs.

More than 6,500 pupils in Suffolk were entered for GCSE exams, according to self-reported results collated from around 70% of schools.

Some schools have done particularly well:

- Debenham High School reported 71% of pupils achieving a grade 5 in English and Maths and 80% achieving a grade 4 in English and Maths.
- Debenham High School and Thomas Mills High School have reported the highest percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 in EBacc this year.
- Northgate High School, Copleston High School, Ormiston Denes Academy, Samuel Ward Academy, Thomas Gainsborough School and Westbourne Academy have all seen significant rises in the percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 4 and 5 in English and Maths.

These figures are based on self-reported data from schools and academies to Suffolk County Council. The results are subject to validation by the Department for Education.

• THE 'HOLD' - PRESERVING SUFFOLK'S HISTORY

Building work on The Hold, the new home of the Suffolk record office, is now well underway. Whilst The Hold is primarily a record storing facility, it has so much more to offer. It will be a completely accessible space - once through its front doors there's no need for visitors to use steps or lifts. There will be a dedicated exhibition space which will host four specially curated exhibitions per year, to encourage both young and old to interact with Suffolk's culture and history. Most of these exhibitions will be replicated at our Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft Record Offices, but with a local twist to ensure that the whole county gets involved.

Exhibitions make up just a small portion of events that will be held in the building. A 200-seat tiered auditorium will primarily be used by the University of Suffolk but will also host conferences and talks by archivists. There is no other auditorium space with this capacity in Ipswich and it's hoped that it can also be used by the wider community.

Another first, not just for Ipswich but for the whole of the county is The Hold's thermal mass maintained strong room. This record storage facility spans an impressive 1650 cubic metres, spread over three floors. It will have enough space to store the records we currently hold in Suffolk and should also comfortably house further records for the next twenty years. Whereas many storage facilities rely on costly air conditioning systems to ensure records are stored at optimum temperatures, the design and construction of The Hold has resulted in it being able to maintain this with minimal intervention. Not only will this save money, but it also helps work towards our goal of being the Greenest County.

The £20m project is on target for completion by Easter 2020 and is set to come in on budget. The building will be part of the University of Suffolk campus and will be run by the county and the university together.

- **SUFFOLK BUCKS NATIONAL TREND FOR VACCINE RATES**

On 21 August it was revealed that national rates for the second MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine have now fallen to just 87.2 %. This is thought to have led to the large increase in measles cases in England and Wales in 2018 (991 compared to only 278 the previous year). However, as a result of the hard work of local healthcare professionals and the engagement of parents, Suffolk continues to buck this trend. Vaccination rates in Suffolk at the end of March 2019 reached 94.5% for the first MMR dose (by 24 months of age) and 90.3% for the second booster dose (by 5 years of age).

Following the introduction of a targeted, multi-agency campaign launched in December 2018, a Suffolk project group was set up to address falling vaccination rates. Public Health Suffolk have worked with NHS England and Improvement, Public Health England, Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups and Child Health Information Service to identify and remove potential barriers for parents and children in accessing immunisation services. They have also improved the quality of vaccination data and encouraged parents to consider the preschool booster/MMR just prior to school entry.

As a result, vaccination rates in Suffolk for both MMR doses improved between the first quarter and last quarter of 2018/19, by 2.4% for dose one and 3.5% for dose two. This is particularly encouraging at a time when there has been a decrease nationally, with the UK failing to meet the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended target of 95% for the second MMR vaccine. This, along with the consequential large spike in the number of confirmed measles cases in England and Wales, has resulted in the UK losing the 'measles free' status they achieved two years ago. The WHO views a country as 'measles free' when there are low levels of measles infection circulating in the population along with high vaccine cover, as well as good systems for identifying cases of measles.

NHS England plans to write to GPs across the country, including Suffolk, to promote 'catch up' campaigns, encouraging the parents of children and young people who haven't received two doses of MMR to contact their GP surgery to arrange vaccination against this highly infectious and preventable disease.

- **UNSAFE GOODS TOTTALLING £23 MILLION STOPPED AT PORT OF FELIXSTOWE**

On 19 August, it was reported that nearly one million unsafe items have been prevented from entering the UK consumer market in the last year. This is thanks to the work of Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards Imports Team at the Port of Felixstowe. Figures for 2018/19 show that 996,143 items across 670 product lines were targeted, assessed and detained, with an estimated value to society of over £23 million.

Products such as baby carriers, strollers, child car seats and electric hot plates have been detained recently. The baby carriers were found to have non-compliant labelling, an easily detachable label which becomes a choking hazard, and the leg openings were too wide meaning that a baby could fall out.

Four in five of the UK's consumer goods arrive in the UK by a container. Half of these enter via the Port of Felixstowe, making it the busiest entry point of its kind in the country. Suffolk is one of the few authorities to host a dedicated Imports Team, which is directly funded by National Trading Standards. As well as protecting the public from unsafe items, the team's work also helps to protect legitimate businesses trying to compete on a level playing field.

- **SUFFOLK IS ON A 'LORRY WATCH'**

On 13 August, it was reported that two new Lorry Watch schemes have launched. The schemes are aimed at reducing the number of HGV drivers ignoring weight restrictions on the county's roads. The villages of Fornham All Saints (near Bury St Edmunds) and Barnham (near Thetford) join nine other similar schemes across Suffolk, set up in conjunction with Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards and Suffolk Highways. Local residents in Fornham All Saints and Barnham have been noticing HGV drivers regularly ignoring weight restrictions and wanted to do something about it.

Suffolk's Lorry Watch started in 2012 and to date has reported nearly 3,000 incidents of HGV vehicles exceeding weight limits, where clearly marked restriction signs are in place. Volunteers monitor their area and report suspected offenders. The existing schemes have been a great success with only four repeat offenders being issued with a warning, meaning that drivers are taking notice when they are first contacted.

If you are interested in joining Lorry Watch in an area in which HGVs are abusing a weight restriction, contact lorrywatch@suffolk.gov.uk or 01473 264859 (option A).

- **BUS SERVICES TO CONTINUE DESPITE FUNDING CHALLENGE**

On 31 July, it was reported that a number of bus services in the county will continue to run, despite a reduction in public funding. Suffolk County Council has been working with operators and communities to find solutions to the funding challenge. The council is pleased to confirm that permanent solutions have been found for two services and a further five will continue to run until at least the end of March 2020.

Operators, local communities and councillors in affected areas are actively working to find alternatives to keep the services running. The extension allows time to find permanent solutions. Suffolk County Council is also confident that although notice is being served on the 375, 483 and 62, solutions can be found. It is working alongside communities, bus users and operators to explore options such as local community transport, taxi-buses and alternative funding. Alternative transport provision is also being sought for rural villages on the 108 route from Lowestoft to James Paget Hospital. Following conversations with residents, options such as community transport or taxi buses are being considered.

A full list of the affected routes and solutions is published on the [Suffolk on Board](#) website.

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

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