

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – MARCH 2023



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

- **MORE FUNDS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, ADULT CARE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The £687.6m package was approved at a Full Council meeting on Thursday 9 February 2023, with a focus on children's services, adult care and the environment. In an online survey, Suffolk residents said that they would like to see more spent on adult services and children's services, and these areas will receive an additional £35.7m and £13.5m, respectively.

In addition, the council's net zero carbon budget, which had previously been approved by Cabinet, sits alongside the financial budget. It is a report on how the organisation is progressing to its ambitious target of being net zero by 2030, enabling the council to measure its carbon emissions, monitor its environmental impact, and identify actions and costs needed to reduce those emissions.

The council's budget will increase by nearly 10% (from £625.3m to £687.6m), the additional money largely generated by a 3.99% increase in the council's share of Council Tax, and more funds from the Government for adult and children's social care. The increase of 3.99% to Council Tax is made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. This will see the council's share of a Band B property's bill rise by 86 pence per week, compared to last year.

- **VIEWS SOUGHT AS SCC PREPARES OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR MORE THAN 1,000 NEW HOMES**

A fresh public consultation on plans by Suffolk County Council to build more than 1,000 new homes on land to the west of Mildenhall has been launched. The new community would include houses, parks, a new school, a new local centre, and an area for jobs. Now, the public is being asked for its views on the council's outline planning application for the site which will be submitted to West Suffolk Council for approval. The proposals can be viewed online at the Suffolk County Council [Land west of Mildenhall](#) website. A public exhibition will also be held at the Mildenhall Hub, in Sheldrick Way, on Tuesday February 21 from 2pm to 8pm.

The site comprises 83 hectares of arable land, adjacent to the Mildenhall hub and 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 ten hectares of open space.

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. It has been previously allocated for mixed-use development of housing, employment, schools, shops, open spaces and recreation. All views must be submitted to Suffolk County Council by 5pm on Monday March 20th.

- **SUFFOLK TRADING STANDARDS SECURES COMPENSATION FOR CUSTOMERS OF CALLOUS COMPANY CHIEF**

David Waters, 74, of Manwick Road, Felixstowe, was the sole director of Anchor Mobility, a company found guilty of 15 counts of unfair commercial practice by Ipswich Crown Court. His offences included fraudulent trading, poor customer service, and misleading consumers by taking large deposits with the promise of delivering goods without ever doing so, resulting in Waters being sentenced to 32 months in prison and fined £15,000 at a hearing in December 2019.

The conviction would not have been possible without the intervention of Suffolk Trading Standards, who discovered more than 20 victims when investigating Anchor Mobility after receiving numerous consumer complaints. Suffolk Trading Standards also sought additional compensation for all known victims, leading to

Waters appearing at Ipswich Crown Court again last June, when a judge ruled that he must repay £50,000 in proceeds from his crimes, reflecting the assets available to him.

Compensation ranging from £600 to over £5,000 is currently being paid out, much to the relief of victims and their loved ones, who praised Suffolk Trading Standards for its efforts in securing a successful outcome.

Anyone who believes they may have fallen victim to a fraudulent trader should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**.

• **SUFFOLK'S EXEMPLARY COMMITMENT TO RETROFITTING HOMES**

While the Warm Homes Suffolk initiative is ensuring that the most vulnerable households receive support, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership is tackling the shortage of trained installers in the county. Almost 50 people have been trained in retrofitting through Skills Bootcamps, providing a much-needed boost to the workforce needed for the delivery of warmer homes. The skilling-up of 46 people in Norfolk and Suffolk in three levels of retrofitting through the Government funded initiative comes after Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders agreed to create a Fuel Poverty Retrofit team to support those struggling most with their energy bills. A Fuel Poverty Retrofit Team will work with residents living in energy inefficient properties to address funding issues and ensure a consistent supply of installers.

An extension of the Warm Homes Suffolk Scheme, the move is expected to lead to around £50m worth of work and deliver almost £4.8m in combined potential savings for households through insulation, air source heat pumps and the replacement of single glazing.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is a key determination of Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan, as doing so will help the county to address climate change and achieve its goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

More than 62,000 properties in Suffolk are thought to have the worst Energy Performance (EPC) grades of E, F and G and 28% of its households are facing fuel poverty. The new team will strive to secure funding to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and ensure minimum standards for the private rental sector.

Just as crucial as the money to fund installations is an available workforce that can meet the demand, and 46 people in Norfolk and Suffolk have received training in domestic retrofitting thanks to the Skills Bootcamps coordinated by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. They have received training in three levels: Retrofit Advice (Level 3), Award in Domestic Retrofit Assessment (Level 4) and Diploma in Retrofit Coordination & Risk Management (Level 5).

Up to around 40 more people are expected to be trained in retrofitting after a successful bid by New Anglia LEP to deliver more Skills Bootcamps in Wave 4 of the initiative. The LEP, in partnership with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, was successful in gaining £1m funding to deliver Skills Bootcamps on behalf of the Department for Education.

• **TEN NOMINEES UP FOR SUFFOLK'S GREEN HERO AWARD**

The award will go to an outstanding individual who inspires others to care for the environment, connects people, and brings environmental projects to life. Suffolk County Council's Creating The Greenest County Awards for 2023 will see a total of nine awards presented to schools, businesses and communities from across the county. They celebrate the achievements of those in Suffolk who are protecting our environment, reducing their carbon emissions and inspiring others. The judging panel is made up of previous winners, sponsors and environmental experts and awards will be presented at an environmentally-friendly ceremony to be held in March at The Hold, in Ipswich.

The Awards categories are:

- Green Business
- Green Small Business

- Green Tourism
- Green School (two awards)
- Green Hero
- Green Community
- Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscape
- Waste Reduction and Recycling

- **NEW HIGHWAYS SERVICES ARRIVING IN SUFFOLK AS MULTI-MILLION-POUND CONTRACT AWARDED**

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023. Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

The council wanted the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out over many months, with various stages of discussions with service providers, to evolve their solutions to meet the various contractual requirements and deliver an effective and efficient highway service for Suffolk. Final submissions were evaluated and extensively moderated before the final winning contract was awarded.

- **WEST SUFFOLK ARCHIVES BRANCH TO MOVE TO WESTERN WAY IN BURY ST EDMUNDS**

The new development will improve accessibility, enabling more people to use the service. Its purpose-built strongroom will create accrual space for the West Suffolk Collections for the next 30 years. The move will also unlock new opportunities to work with the health and leisure partners on site to develop community-based projects to support health and well-being. As part of long-term planning for the Suffolk Archives service, the county council's cabinet was presented with options for either remaining at its current location in Raingate Street or moving to the planned new Western Way community hub being developed by West Suffolk Council.

Recent investigations have shown that if the service were to remain at Raingate Street, alterations requiring significant investment would be needed for the long-term future sustainability of the building. Suffolk County Council approved the proposals to move the service to the new Western Way Development at a meeting of the council's Cabinet on Tuesday 21 February.

The first phase of the new development at Western Way is anticipated to open to the public in Autumn 2025, with the new West Suffolk Branch of Suffolk Archives located on the ground floor. Phase one will also include sports and leisure facilities, health services and a pre-school.

Until then, the West Suffolk Archive Service will continue to operate from its current location in Raingate Street in Bury St Edmunds.

- **IN-PERSON CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES RETURN IN SUFFOLK**

During the pandemic, like many other services, Citizenship Ceremonies moved to being conducted online. 563 new citizens were welcomed in virtual ceremonies in 2022. In-person Ceremonies have once again been

taking place since 18 January 2023 and take place every month at the Ipswich Register Office and on alternating months at the Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft offices.

Citizenship Ceremonies can only be booked once an application has been approved by the Home Office, and an official invitation has been sent. Please call our Ipswich Office on **0345 607 2050** to book or email citizenship@suffolk.gov.uk. For more information, please visit [the Citizenship Ceremony page on our website](#).

- **FUTURE OF POPULAR IPSWICH SPORTS CENTRE SECURED BY SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

Vivify, a school's lettings company, will replace Ipswich Borough Council in the management of the public sports facilities at Northgate. The company has extensive experience of running more than 500 sports facilities across the country. It will manage the bookings system and out of hours service. The facilities will be formally handed over on April 1st and will reopen on April 17th following site maintenance and cleaning. The final details of the agreement are currently being worked through.

The new agreement will cost Suffolk County Council in excess of £235,000 until July 2024. During this contract period, Suffolk County Council will continue to review the longer term business case.

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

stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

CLlr Stephen Burroughes

County Councillor for the Framlingham Division

Deputy Cabinet Member for Children & Young Peoples Services