

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2022



### *Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division*

#### • **LOVELL PARTNERSHIPS SELECTED AS JOINT VENTURE PREFERRED BIDDER**

It was announced on January 14<sup>th</sup> that Suffolk County Council has agreed to join forces with Lovell Partnerships to form a property development alliance to build nearly 3,000 much-needed homes.

Suffolk County Council appoints Lovell Partnerships as preferred bidder for the joint venture alliance that will build nearly 3,000 homes. The joint venture will deliver new housing-led developments to be built on council land. Lovell Partnerships were identified as the preferred bidder following a nine-month procurement process. Contracts are expected to be concluded in spring 2022, with the joint venture established in the summer.

Five initial locations have already been identified in Lowestoft, Mildenhall, Bramford, West Row and Newmarket, with capacity for a total of around 2,800 homes plus new schools, employment land and open spaces. The proposals include an option for further sites to be delivered by the joint venture in future should additional suitable council-owned land become surplus to requirements.

Homes will be developed to be low carbon in line with the emerging Future Homes Standard.

Lovell Partnerships, part of the Morgan Sindall Group, is participating in a number of joint ventures with councils across the UK to support similar housing delivery aspirations. The 50:50 partnership is intended to deliver around £700m of gross development value over the course of the proposed 15-year agreement, with the option to extend to a further five. The partnership will benefit from working with other companies within the Morgan Sindall Group, as well as local suppliers, to enable it to deliver the works at pace.

Suffolk County Council has been advised throughout the procurement process by Concertus Design and Property Consultants, Avison Young property consultants, and legal advisors Pinsent Masons.

#### • **KEEPING SUFFOLK SAFE FROM SCAMS**

**By Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Public Protection and Communities.**

As we find ourselves midway through January, many of us will be having varying degrees of success with sticking to our New Year's resolutions, be these moving more, learning a new language or giving healthy eating a go. Of course, one of the most important resolutions that we should all hold is to stay savvy about scams throughout 2022 and beyond.

These are, unfortunately, on the rise. Action Fraud received 413,553 reports of fraud in the UK between April 2020 and March 2021; an increase of 33% from the previous year. More than £2.3 billion was lost by victims as a result, although this is likely to just be the tip of the iceberg, as many will have felt too scared or ashamed to report and others will be completely unaware that they have been duped.

Some of the rise in cases of fraud can be directly attributed to scammers capitalising on Covid, with new cons cropping up even now, almost two years into the pandemic. Scams include texts, emails, or phone calls supposedly from the NHS or your GP, requesting payment for the Covid-19 vaccination or the Covid-19 Pass. Although these can often appear genuine, the NHS will never ask you to pay for the vaccine or Pass, or to provide your bank account or card details.

Our Trading Standards team have also received reports of fraudsters selling face coverings or hand sanitiser online which either never arrives or, worse still, doesn't comply with safety standards. Whilst internet shopping has been a lifeline for many during the pandemic, care should be taken when making any purchases online.

Beat the cyber crooks by only shopping at reputable retailers and doing your research first; try to make sure that they're legitimate if you haven't purchased anything online from them previously. This can be done by

using independent review websites such as Trust Pilot: [uk.trustpilot.com](https://uk.trustpilot.com) to search for customer feedback on a retailer before buying anything from them.

Paying for items using a credit card is another great way to help you shop safely, as any individual item costing over £100 and up to £30,000 will be covered by section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act. This means that the credit card company has equal responsibility (or 'liability') with the seller if there's a problem with your purchase or the company you've bought it from fails.

It's also worth remembering that if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Whilst I appreciate that everyone loves a bargain, no discount is ever worth the dangerous consequences of items which haven't been adequately tested.

We are not immune to this in Suffolk. Since April last year, our Imports Surveillance team, working at the port of Felixstowe, have discovered over 15,000 unsafe and non-compliant e-scooters trying to make their way into the country.

Many of these were refused entry into the UK or destroyed at the border, to ensure the safety of consumers, after a high quantity had no labelling or technical documentation to show they complied with the relevant UK safety standards.

With dodgy electrical items like these, it's not just money that you risk losing, but your life as they can, in severe cases, cause fire or serious injury.

Only buying genuine products from trusted retailers, rather than third-party selling sites, will really help to protect you and your family. I'd also urge you to reduce the risk of fires in the home further by registering your electrical appliances to enable the manufacturer to contact you in the event of a product safety recall.

Our council is proud to support Register My Appliance Week, which began yesterday, with more information on this available at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/news](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/news).

You can also keep up to date on all dangerous product recalls, including those for food and toys, by visiting [www.suffolk.gov.uk/jointhefight](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/jointhefight) and signing up to receive a free weekly email alert on this and scams, as a Trading Standards Consumer Champion.

Further advice on scams currently being seen in Suffolk is available on Trading Standards' Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards](https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards)) and Twitter account ([twitter.com/SuffolkTS](https://twitter.com/SuffolkTS)) so if you're not already doing so, give them a follow, as this could prevent you from falling victim to fraudsters.

If you want to stop others from being scammed, sign up to become a Friend Against Scams at: [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/](https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/). This will empower you to spot the signs of scams and take a stand against these. It doesn't require much of your time and will help to protect not just you and your loved ones, but also the wider community – making it the perfect way to give something back this year.

Although scams may be on the rise, if we all work together, we can stop fraudsters in their tracks and ensure that Suffolk continues to be a safe place that everyone is proud to call home.

#### • **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL WAIVES FEES FOR PLATINUM JUBILEE EVENTS**

It was announced on January 18<sup>th</sup> that to mark the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk County Council will be waiving street party road closure fees. On Sunday 6 February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen will celebrate her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. To celebrate this milestone, events will be taking place across the Country, particularly over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend, between 2 and 5 June 2022. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours.

For all events on Sunday 5 June 2022, which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures.

The following website has been set up for those who are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>.

As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential with no through traffic (i.e. a cul-de-sac or traffic not able to access another road from the event road, etc.) and only resident traffic will be affected.

To be allocated traffic management to assist with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022. Traffic management will consist of 5 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign and an advance warning sign, which may be delivered to the chosen drop off point, up to Thursday 2 June 2022.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of traffic management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of traffic management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>

If you have any queries, please contact Suffolk County Councils Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email [customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk) Find more information on how to get involved in celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign, at [platinumjubilee.gov.uk](http://platinumjubilee.gov.uk).

### **COUNCIL'S NET ZERO AMBITIONS AIM HIGH WITH FIRST CARBON BUDGET & BIODIVERSITY COMMITMENT**

On January 24<sup>th</sup> Suffolk County Council published proposals for its first-ever full carbon budget, as it strives to be a Net Zero organisation by 2030. Inaugural full carbon budget to be presented alongside financial budget

- Policy to enhance biodiversity across 30% of Suffolk County Council's estate

The Net Zero Carbon Budget will allow the council to measure its carbon emissions, and monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions it makes. This will mean it can report each year on its progress, tracking its ambitions towards Net Zero. There are many activities which the council will monitor, from the energy used powering its buildings to the miles travelled by council workers, from the waste it disposes to the fuel used to run buses and gritters.

Suffolk County Council recently announced a £12.8 million investment to begin decarbonising the buildings that it owns, reducing emissions and making them cheaper to run. We have a history of providing dedicated investment to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and services. This has led to reductions in carbon emissions in recent years, through projects such as replacing fossil fuel boilers with bio-mass units, installing solar panels and solar hot water systems, rainwater harvesting, updating lighting and improving insulation.

### **Growing Suffolk's Biodiversity**

Proposals have also been published which would see Suffolk County Council enhance the biodiversity value of at least 30% of its land and assets by 2030.

It would also see the council working with partners, communities and landowners to help substantially reverse the decline of biodiversity across Suffolk.

The proposed policy is a result of the work undertaken by the Policy Development Panel (PDP) which was set up in July 2021.

### **Councillor Rout said:**

The policy proposal includes ambitions which stretch across the whole organisation, from looking at how it manages highway trees to the impact of street lighting, from how it procures goods and services to the potential nature-based flood management solutions.

The Net Zero Carbon Budget proposal will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022 and discussed at the Full Council meeting on 17 February 2022. The Biodiversity PDP proposal will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022 and can be immediately implemented if agreed.

- **SUFFOLK PLACES CO-PRODUCTION AT THE HEART OF ITS STRATEGY OF SUPPORT FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

On January 26<sup>th</sup> the Suffolk Learning Disability Partnership co-produced a refresh of the Suffolk Joint Learning Disability Strategy. The Suffolk Learning Disability Partnership, an independent group of self-advocates, family carers, health and social care commissioners, police, Healthwatch Suffolk, voluntary organisations and housing providers, has co-produced a refresh of the Suffolk Joint Learning Disability Strategy. The strategy aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities live good lives as part of their community with the right support, at the right time, from the right people. The original strategy was launched in 2015 and has helped to identify and explore specific needs, and given people and their families a voice in the development and commissioning of new services.

The refresh has placed the concept of co-production at its heart. Co-production means people, carers and professionals working together as equal partners to: design, develop, commission, deliver and review services, information and advice. This strategy reinforces the belief that services designed with input from the people they seek to support, are better suited to deliver upon their needs. Beyond more opportunities for co-production in the development of new services, the strategy also acknowledges the opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autism to make use of new technologies and digital solutions to enhance accessibility to services, as well as improving and increasing information and communication and providing good advocacy and support.

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

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