

BAWDSEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL 2017/18 ANNUAL REVIEW

Council agrees further savings and council tax for 2018/19

In February this year the County Council agreed its Budget for 2018/19, based on the need to save £23.9m given reductions in grant funding from central government. The budget changes include the following savings from each service:

- Adult and Community Services - £12m - Working with care providers to look at how best to manage future pricing structures and working with partners including health to reduce demand.
- Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services - £0.25m - Moving towards using digital technology, maximising income and working with Suffolk Libraries to agree a fixed price contract for next four years.
- Fire and Public Safety - £0.24m - Savings from 'blue-light' collaboration including sharing facilities with the police and ambulance services. Further efficiencies within Trading Standards and Health & Safety. Reduction in Citizens Advice Bureau grants.
- Resource Management – £1.71m - Use evidence-based approach to reduce highways maintenance requirements where possible. Continue to make best use of property, saving money by sharing buildings with public sector partners. Review contracts for IT services.
- Corporate Services – £9.7m - Reprofile debt repayment in line with recent guidance, maximising efficiencies in contract management and increasing the returns from Wholly Owned Companies.

In addition to these savings, the Council also agreed to rise general council tax by 2.99%, which is the first increase since 2009. The National Adult Social Care Precept that is ringfenced to help fund Adult Social Care will be equivalent to 2%.

As part of the budget plan, it is expected that the Council will use around £3 million from reserves but this source of funding is not sustainable in the long-term. A new portfolio of transformation programmes was launched in November 2017. The new transformation programmes will focus on reducing existing overspends and meeting the forecast budget gap of £56m to 2021.

Community Fire Volunteers wanted by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is currently on the lookout for enthusiastic and caring people who want to make a difference to their community. Community Fire Volunteers are fully trained volunteers who share fire safety advice in their area, visiting elderly and vulnerable people in their homes to undertake a Safer Home Visit for them, fitting smoke alarms if required and offering fire safety advice. Those who become Community Fire Volunteers will also be able to get involved in other ways, such as attending community events and fairs or giving talks to community groups about fire safety. Applicants must older

than 18 years old and be available for at least 12 hours every month. Volunteers will receive ongoing training and uniform for when they undertake their duties. Support will also be given to allow volunteers to extend their skills and expenses will be paid to cover any costs incurred while on duty.

Suffolk Fostering Service launches fostering recruitment campaign

Suffolk County Council's Fostering Service launched a series of campaigns in mid to late 2017 to encourage more Suffolk residents to become foster carers. 820 children currently live in care in Suffolk and there is an urgent need for more people to come forward to foster. The first campaign will focus on the need to recruit more foster carers for teenagers. Suffolk Fostering Service is the longest established provider of fostering services in the county, offering competitive fees, 24-hour support services and up to 21 days paid leave per year. The first campaign focuses on the real-life experiences of two Suffolk Fostering Service foster carers, Ethel from Ipswich and Sammy from Lowestoft. Teenagers in care have often gone through a great deal in their lives and this campaign aims to give an honest reflection of what it takes to be a foster carer and the rewards that can come as a result. The campaign is accompanied by a [new promotional video](#) which features both Ethel and Sammy, providing an insight into what it takes to be a foster carer for teenagers and the positive difference they make to a young person's life. The video addresses why the application process can be timely and thorough, with Ethel and Sammy both describing how the vulnerability of the children in care makes the timeframe absolutely necessary. It also makes clear that the robustness and intensity of the process is equally there to benefit and protect the prospective foster carer, ensuring that they are fully prepared and certain of the commitment they are making. It's really important to get more people talking about foster care and I would encourage Suffolk residents to look at their own lives to consider whether they have the patience, compassion and the spare room required to provide a child with the secure home life they need." For more information visit: www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk

GCSE and A Level results on the rise in Suffolk

Results published by the Department for Education early in 2018 show results for GCSE and A Levels on the rise.

GCSE - Almost 7,000 students in Suffolk were entered for GCSE results this year. The figures show that 2% more students in Suffolk are achieving the expected standards in English and Maths at GCSE compared with last year. In 2017, there was a change to the way that English and Maths GCSEs are graded. Results are now graded from 9 to 1, (previously A to G) with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The expected standard for pupils to achieve is now a grade 4 and above (previously a C grade and above), with grade 5 considered a 'strong pass'. These changes will be phased in to cover all subjects by 2020. 62.4% of students in the county are achieving the expected standard in English and Maths and Suffolk has closed the gap to national to just 1.1%. Suffolk has also risen by 24 places in national league tables for this measure, to 85th out of 151 authorities. The county has risen 7 places in national rankings for the percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate. Progress of Suffolk students continues to be above the national average for state funded schools, with the county achieving an average Progress 8 score of -0.01, compared with -0.03 nationally. Progress 8 measures how well pupils of all abilities have progressed by comparing them with students who achieved similar levels in Key Stage 2 across the country.

A Level - Almost 3,000 pupils were entered for A Levels in Suffolk. The A Level figures show that Suffolk pupils once again performed well with the General Applied entry and Tech Level entries remaining above the national average figures. A Level attainment is measured by the Department for Education using a points system. Points are given based on the type of A Level and the grade achieved. For example, an A Level at grade A is worth 50 points, whereas an AS Level would be worth half of this. Suffolk's Academic average points per entry in 2017 was 30.01. For General Applied, (previously referred to as vocational) the average points per entry has increased to 35.95 from last year's figure of 34.70. This has remained above the national figure of 35.6. At Tech Level, Suffolk's average points has increased by more than 3% to 34.66 and remains above national figure of 32.2.

97% of students receive preferred Secondary School

In 2017, Suffolk County Council received its highest number of applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to be educated at from September 2018 in Year 7. The total was 7,447. Last year it was 7171. 91.61% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 97.23% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools. This percentage figure of 91.61% equates to a total of 6822 pupils. Families who applied online will be able to log on to the council's Online Service from today to see their school place offer, and will receive an email to confirm this offer. We will also send letters by second class post today (March 1), to all applicants, including those who made a paper application, to give more details about the next steps open to them. Any parents or carers with children born between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2007 and who have not yet applied for a school place should make an application immediately by downloading the CAF1 application form from the council's website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. For further information, such as how to view your offer online, and guidance if you have not received your preferred offer, please read our [School admissions FAQ page](#).

Suffolk County Council's Children's Services continue to improve following Ofsted pilot inspection

The council's Children's Services are now rated 'Good' in all areas. Ofsted have developed a new framework for their future inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). Earlier in 2017, Suffolk County Council was asked to be a pilot site for this new inspection framework. Suffolk County Council's Children's Services were previously judged 'Good' overall at the end of 2015, a grade that only a third of Local Authorities have achieved. Whilst this was positive, the council recognised that there were still areas for improvement and Ofsted's latest report reflects the action taken to improve in all areas. All areas are now judged to be 'Good'. This puts Suffolk County Council in the top 25% of all Local Authorities. Inspectors were positive about every part of Children's Services, the quality of work with children, and the passion and commitment of everyone they met. Their report highlights that: "The local authority's commitment to children and families is clear and unambiguous... Staff know children well and are passionate about changing their lives." Suffolk County Council's Children's Services is now in the top 25% of all Local Authorities.

Key points made by Ofsted in the report recognise the authority's work in the following areas:

- **Early Help:** Early help is making a positive difference to the lives of children and families. Children and families benefit from a good range of early help services.

- **Social Care & Safeguarding:** The children and adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is well established. It is appropriately resourced and well managed. Thresholds are applied consistently. Information is shared appropriately. Decision-making is timely. The way in which the local authority has rolled out its preferred social work model across all children and young people's services is extremely impressive. The model is encouraging social workers and other staff to work more effectively with families.
- **Children in Care:** The local authority makes good use of its legal powers and acts decisively to protect children who are unable to continue to live at home safely. Social workers clearly understand the importance of achieving permanence for children in care. The emphasis is always on finding the right long-term solution for each child.
- **Strong Leadership:** Senior managers lead by example. They want the best for children, young people and families. They set and expect high standards of themselves and others. They understand the importance of getting the basics right but are not afraid to innovate.
- **Partnership working:** Partnership working, particularly with the police and with health services, is strong. This is evident in the way in which the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has developed. It is also apparent in the role played by health partners in early help. Working closely with other agencies, the local authority has strengthened its response to missing children and child sexual exploitation.

Suffolk school travel consultation launched

Suffolk County Council has called for unity in efforts to find a long-term solution to providing affordable home to school transport as a major public consultation gets underway. People who give their views as part of a consultation on the future of school travel in Suffolk will be listened to carefully and have the opportunity to influence the final outcome, the council has said. The two and half month consultation, which started on Tuesday 12 December, invites people to help the council shape the future of school and post-16 travel policies. Suffolk County Council has already listened to headteachers and included additional options in the consultation document. The pledge today is to do more of the same as the authority seeks help to find a long-term solution to the funding issues facing home to school transport. In Suffolk, £21 million of taxpayers' money is spent per year getting children to and from school. Suffolk County Council has already introduced a number of efficiency changes to the service saving around £2.6 million. Now, like many other councils across the country, the authority needs to consider making more significant changes. It is therefore consulting on changing its school and post-16 travel policies so the service can be affordable, sustainable, and capable of meeting growing demand in the future. The council's current school and post-16 travel policies go above legal requirements, which means around 2400 children and young people receive free/subsidised school or post-16 travel that Suffolk County Council is not legally required to provide and that they wouldn't get in many other parts of the country. In addition, around 2400 children receive free travel to schools further away than legally required to provide. The proposed consultation seeks views on changing these policies and includes three alternative options, pre-and post-16: -

Option 1: In September 2019, change the school travel policy so that it is in line with the legal requirements. This would mean implementing all the changes in one go, including ceasing free travel to the transport priority area schools where it is not the pupils' nearest.

Option 2: From September 2019, introduce the changes year by year as a child joins or moves school so that it is in line with legal requirements. This means that we would

introduce all the changes on a phased basis. This option would cost Suffolk County Council an estimated £8.8 million to implement.

Option 3: Make no changes to the school travel policy but make savings from other services provided by Suffolk County Council.

The consultation ran from 12 December 2017 to 28 February 2018. The results of the consultation will be thoroughly reviewed before Cabinet takes a decision in June.

County Council consulting on Record Office Service in Lowestoft

Suffolk County Council has announced that it will hold a public consultation over the future of the Record Office Service in Lowestoft. It is not sustainable to continue to hold archive material in the storeroom in the current Record Office building. The basement location means that it is prone to flooding and damp hazards, at risk of mould growth and fire resistance is not up to the required standard. This, along with the general decline in visitors and the council's ongoing requirement to make savings in line with its objectives to fill the budget gap of £56m by 2021, means that changes need to be made to the service in Lowestoft. The results of the formal consultation will be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Committee later in the year for a final decision to be made on the future service provision. For further details of the consultation process, visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk.

Drone technology to help manage blue light service incidents

15th February saw the official launch of the use of two Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircrafts in Suffolk. The technology, commonly referred to as drones have been developed and funded by Suffolk Resilience Forum for use across the county. As part of a multi-agency Air Support Unit, the drones will be used by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response. The drones will provide a range of aerial surveillance options to support emergency services and voluntary organisations across a wide range of incidents including:

- large-scale open fires or complex structural firesurban area search and rescue
- major incident or disaster response
- investigative support
- hazardous materials response including Environmental Impact Assessments
- road traffic accidents
- significant multi-agency events
- missing persons searches
- pre-planned operations and risk information gathering.

By improving the ability to see and understand what is happening from the air, the drones will **support** emergency services and voluntary organisations to inform the decisions they make when dealing with an incident. They will also help to reduce risks to the public and emergency service workers. The drones and camera equipment cost around £42,500 and they are based at Woodbridge Fire and Police station, have 24/7 emergency response capability and can be used by 17 specially trained remote pilots. The drones will provide important visual information which will be used alongside experienced operational commanders to complete the decision-making picture and help resolve incidents as quickly and safely as possible. The drones have already been used a number of times, most recently at the fire at Saxmundham train station to not only provide pictures of fire spreading

and possible collapse in areas that may not have been possible for firefighters to access or see, but also to assist the joint investigation team to determine the location and possible cause of the fire.

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