

Bawdsey Parish Council

SCC Newsletter - December 2017

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.

Suffolk County Council is also asking for feedback on several other matters, including using Rights of Way as part of the way distance to a school is measured and a range of local solutions, such as Local collection hubs and opt-in to travel, which we have developed with a range of schools. Further details on these options can be found on the consultation website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel. To have your say from 9.00am on 12 December please fill out the consultation survey, alternatively you can download a hard copy from the website and return to:

Suffolk County Council – school and post-16 travel consultation
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

The consultation will run from 12 December 2017 to 28 February 2018 and there will be a full programme of events and opportunities for discussion. This includes consultation workshops where you can consider themes from the consultation, the proposals and general questions and answer sessions.

Venue	Room	Date	Time
Kesgrave Conference Centre <i>Twelve Acre Approach, Ipswich IP5 1JF</i>	Orwell Room	16 January 2018	19:00 - 20:30
Eye Community Centre <i>Magdalen Street, Eye, IP23 2DH</i>	Main Hall	17 January 2018	19:00 - 20:30
River Stour Trust - the Visitor Education Centre <i>Dove House, Great Cornard, CO10 0GF</i>	VEC	18 January 2018	19:00 - 20:30
Beccles Public Hall <i>Smallgate, Beccles NR34 9AD</i>	Main Hall	22 January 2018	19:00 - 20:30
Lakenheath Pavilion <i>Eriswell Road, Lakenheath IP27 9AF</i>	Main Hall	23 January 2018	19:00 - 20:30
West Suffolk House <i>Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU</i>	WSH - GFR12 - Meeting Room	26 January 2018	5 sessions between 14:00 - 19:30

Suffolk chosen as one of 10 pilot areas to retain 100% of business rates

The amount of money allocated to each Local Authority in England for the next financial year was announced in December by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid. As part of the announcement, Suffolk County Council has been named as one of the pilot areas for a new Government scheme to retain 100% of business rates from Council Tax in 2018/19. In future, Business Rates will be an even greater income stream for all local authorities and this is an opportunity for Suffolk to influence how it will operate in a two-tier system. Until more information is released from the Department for communities and Local Government it is not possible to say exactly how much additional income this could generate into the Suffolk system.

Fully funded first-time central heating systems for Suffolk residents

Suffolk's local authorities are now able to provide fully funded central heating systems* to 514 fuel poor households across Suffolk over the next three years. Around 4 million UK households are in fuel poverty, unable to affordably heat their home to the temperature needed to stay warm and healthy. As well as being on low incomes many of these households are also faced with the additional burden of relying on heating systems that are inefficient and expensive to run. The local authorities working together as the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership have been successful in securing funding from the first round of the Warm Homes Fund for a project worth £4.3 million. The Suffolk project is being managed by the County Council, administered by Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People based at Suffolk Coastal District Council and supported with further funding from Babergh, Mid-Suffolk, Forest Heath and Waveney District Councils plus Ipswich and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils. Alongside the first-time heating system, households will also be able to benefit from new insulation measures to make the homes more energy efficient as well as grants from the Suffolk Community Foundation's 'Surviving Winter Appeal' where eligible. The new £150m fund was established by National Grid using part of the proceeds from the sale of the company's majority stake in its gas distribution business. It will fund the installation of affordable heating solutions in fuel poor households which don't use mains gas as their primary source of heat.

*subject to survey and conditions

Primary School application deadline approaches

Parents and carers have until Monday 15th January to make their application to secure their child's place at a Suffolk Primary, Infant, Junior or Middle school for September 2018. Any child born between 1st September 2013 and 31st August 2014 is due to start primary school from September 2018. An application for a full-time school place must be made, even if a child is already attending a nursery class in an infant or primary school, a pre-school or a children's centre next to a school site. It is recommended that parents and carers apply online as they will receive confirmation of their application. Alternatively, parents and carers can apply on a paper CAF1 application form. Both applications can be accessed at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of paper applications and therefore suggest that proof of posting is obtained. A completed application must be submitted or posted for every child wanting a primary, infant, junior or middle school place from September 2018. If families are planning to move house or think their circumstances may change before September, it is still important to make an application on time. Advice and guidance about this process is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. For guidance about the application process, parents and carers can watch the council's 'Applying for a Primary School place' video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m90lgVibmck>. Families who apply online will be able to log on to the Online Service on the National Offer Day, 16th April 2018 to see their school place offer, and will also receive an email to confirm this offer on the same day. Offer letters will also be sent by second class post to all applicants. Information to help parents and carers make their application is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Ground investigations for Upper Orwell Crossings begin in early 2018

Structural and environmental tests to finalise the detailed design for the Upper Orwell Crossings in Ipswich are to begin early 2018. The ground investigation works, which could last up to three months are scheduled to begin on 15 January 2018. Contractors Fugro GeoServices Ltd will dig trial holes and deep boreholes both on land and in the water. The works will determine the underlying properties of the ground and river bed. Geotechnical Engineers will analyse the information and use it to design the foundations on which the three bridges will sit. Land based work will take place between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday and 7am and 1pm on Saturdays, while the work in the water will be carried out 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Noise levels will be monitored closely throughout the works. There will also be a period where samples are required on pavements and roads – however this work will be undertaken outside of the morning and evening rush hour periods to minimise disruption to road users

High Needs Funding Consultation

On Wednesday 13th December 2017, Suffolk County Council launched a consultation, to reform the way in which education providers are funded for delivering high needs support to children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities. The proposal is to establish a fairer, more transparent and easily understood set of high needs funding policies. Funding is not being reduced, the consultation is to determine the fairest way to use the budget we have. The proposals have been drawn up working with the Schools' Forum High Needs Funding Group. The Group which has members from across a range of providers, have worked hard over the last six months, to ensure that the proposals put forward acknowledge and respond to the needs of providers. To find out more about the proposals and consultation please go to: www.suffolk.gov.uk/highneedsfunding. The consultation runs from 13th December 2017 to 9th February 2018. Invitations for 1:1 meetings will be offered to those providers who have specialist provision. If you have any queries, then please email highneedsfunding@suffolk.gov.uk.

Andrew Reid
County Councillor – Wilford Division
Tel: 07545 423799
Email: Andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk