

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIA VIDEO
TELECONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 9TH MARCH 2021 AT 7.00PM**

Present: Mr J Owen Mayor of Sudbury, in the CHAIR.

Mrs S Ayres
Mr N Bennett
Mr T Cresswell
Mr O Forder
Ms L Fowler
Mr S Hall

Ms E Murphy
Mr A Osborne
Mrs J Osborne
Miss A Owen
Mr R Spivey

Mr C Griffin
Mrs J Budd
Mr B Smith

Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
Community Warden Supervisor

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs J Antill, J Sayers and County Councillor C Spence.

Councillor D Williams was absent but no apologies had been received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with guidance from Babergh District Council's Standards Committee, Mrs S Ayres, Mr T Cresswell, Mr A Osborne, Mrs J Osborne, and Miss A Owen declared that they were Babergh District Councillors. Mr Owen declared that he was a Suffolk County Councillor. Mr and Mrs Osborne asked that it be noted that their views expressed at this meeting would be based on information available at the time and might not be the same as those expressed at meetings involving other councils.

3 DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

No declarations were received.

4 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensation had been received.

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 9th February 2021 be confirmed and would be signed as a correct record.

6 REPORTS

- a) County Councillors' reports – Councillor J Owen gave a summary of his report.

A copy of Councillor Owen's report is shown at minute page 165.

As part of his report, Councillor Owen invited Councillor Hall to give a brief report on the meeting they'd had with Halstead Town Council regarding changes to the Strategic Lorry Route. Essex County Council attended the meeting and advised that they would consider removing 'Sudbury' from the road sign at the Boreham Interchange junction on the A12. This would encourage traffic to continue along the A12 to Colchester before turning north on the A134 for Sudbury.

Members raised concerns again over HGVs using Station Road and Friars Street, which were too narrow for this class of vehicle. One sign was in place on Station Road, but it would need to be relocated to warn drivers not to turn left out of the lorry park by waitrose. An additional sign would need to be installed on Market Hill warning HGVs not to turn left into Friars Street.

Members raised various highway issues which will be discussed by the Planning, Development and Highways Committee.

A copy of Councillor Spence's report is shown at minute page 168.

RESOLVED

That Councillors J Owen and C Spence be thanked for their reports.

- b) District Councillor's report - Councillor Mrs Osborne gave the District Councillor's report. A copy of the report is shown at minute page 184.

Members questioned why car parking charges in Sudbury were going to be more than those in Hadleigh. Councillor Mrs Osborne explained that she had sent the Mayor an email detailing this information. This email is shown at minute page 186.

Councillor Mrs Osborne explained that Babergh District Council were to undertake a complete strategic review on parking in Sudbury, including permit and residents parking. This review would start in the next few months and would establish whether the capacity for parking in Sudbury was sufficient.

The bids received for the purchase of Belle Vue House and the old Swimming Pool site would be discussed by the Cabinet on Thursday. Babergh were in support of opening up the entrance of the park to include a new café and toilet block. It was hoped that a recommendation to use monies from the sale on a 'whatever funding was required' basis would be approved to enable the new opening to be developed.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mrs Osborne be thanked for her report.

- c) Policing Report: The Town Clerk briefly summarised the latest meeting that had been held ahead of the Council meeting. Concerns had been raised over the recent

spate of burglaries that were occurring during the early evening. Members suggested that a more obvious police presence could help as a deterrent.

- d) Public Forum – Via live link members of the public were able to type questions pertaining to Sudbury.

Questions received included discussions over the parking situation on Market Hill, plus ways the Town can celebrate coming out of lockdown, but also a commemorative event to remember all those who have lost lives.

RESOLVED

The question regarding the future parking on Market Hill is discussed at agenda item 9. The Leisure and Environment Committee will discuss all future events for the year at their meeting on the 30th March.

7 TO ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

The Chairman of Planning advised members that the committee had approved the Reserved Matters application relating to the proposed Chilton Woods development, as well as of change of use application for one of the former Winch and Black stores being changed into a Pizza Restaurant.

Planning, Development & Highways
1st February 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

Planning, Development & Highways
15th February 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

Policy & Resources
16th February 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

Leisure, Environment & Highways
23rd February 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

Finance
2nd March 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

Human Resources
3rd March 2021

It was RESOLVED to ADOPT the REPORT

The Mayor agreed to a request to alter the order of business from the agenda so as to discuss the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) on North Street ahead of the TTRO on Market Hill.

8 PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON NORTH STREET

Members considered the recommendation from the Planning, Development and Highways Committee that the current TTRO on North Street should be removed as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

That the current TTRO on North Street (including the related equipment) should be removed at the end of March 2021.

9 PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON MARKET HILL

Members considered the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that the current TTRO on Market Hill should remain in force until the beginning of September 2021.

Members debated a proposal to amend the date in the motion from September to April 2021, which was rejected by a clear majority of 7 votes to 4 votes, with one abstention.

RESOLVED

That the current TTRO on Market Hill should remain in force until the beginning of September 2021.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The draft Risk Management Strategy, which had been discussed at the previous full council meeting, had now been considered by each committee and had incorporated their concerns. Members were requested to adopt the document.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Management Strategy be adopted.

11 COMBINED TOURIST INFORMATION AND TOWN COUNCIL FRONT DESK

The Town Clerk advised that, now it had been confirmed that the Babergh District Council Customer Access Point was being re-located to the Library, it made sense for the Town Council's Tourist Information Centre to move back to the vacant desk in the Town Hall. This proposal would allow a combined tourist information and town council services front desk to be opened in the town hall from 1st April 2021, subject to COVID restrictions.

RESOLVED

That the new structure for a combined tourist information and town council services front desk in the Town Hall be approved.

12 SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL STRUCTURE CHARGES

The Town Clerk advised that he had been informed that Suffolk County Council were introducing a new charge for Councils who wished to hang flower baskets or Christmas decorations from their lampposts. Over £70 would be charged per lamppost, per year, for safety testing to ensure they could support the baskets or decorations attached to them. The Town Council currently have 74 flower baskets on lampposts and an additional £22 per post would be charged for those that would have Christmas lights on.

The Community Warden Manager advised that Suffolk County Council had agreed to reduce the charge for the structural tests on lampposts that hold up the icicle lights that hang from buildings – therefore over the highway, to a one-off payment of £75. Their original charge had been £75 per street.

RESOLVED

That the Town Council strongly objected to these charges. That the Town Clerk write a strong letter to Suffolk County Council stating that these charges appeared to be excessive given the work required. These costs had not been budgeted for and would mean removing the flower displays to the detriment of the town's appearance.

That County Councillors Jack Owen and Colin Spence be asked to take up this matter with Suffolk County Council and have it reversed.

13 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor did not have anything to report.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9.25pm

Chairman.....

County Council report to the March 2021 Town Council MeetingTuesday, 9 March 2021

Dear Colleagues

Coronavirus in Suffolk

As of 07 March there have been **28,738** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been **3,774.6** cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is the lowest overall COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

Area name	Daily Cases reported	Weekly Cases reported	Weekly case rate*	Wk on wk trend*	Cumulative cases	Cumulative case rate	National Rate Rank (of 315)
▲							
Babergh	4	19	20.6	↓	3,756	4081.00	272
East Suffolk	4	71	36.9	↓	8,469	3394.90	292
Ipswich	7	60	45.3	↓	7,174	5239.80	200
Mid Suffolk	3	24	24.1	↓	3,145	3027.10	299
West Suffolk	12	75	38.0	↓	6,194	3459.50	290
Suffolk	30	249	34.9	↓	28,738	3,774.6	
East of England	398	3,175	56.2	↓	374,665	6,008.0	
England	4,497	35,987	69.9	↓	3,694,339	6,563.4	

Suffolk and North-East Essex rank 2nd in the country for first dose vaccinations
For the week up to February 28, a total of 373,300 first doses of vaccine have been administered, ranking our area joint 2nd place in the country, and a boost on last week's 3rd place.

Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative.

Suffolk County Council (SCC), working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has been successful in gaining over £3M of funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services.

Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre.

The council's Children and Young People service also reviewed their portfolio of school buildings along with Concertus. This review resulted in the submission of grant applications for nine schools across the county, all of which were successful.

Through this scheme, it is supporting the council's own commitment to be net zero by 2030 along with the Government's own net zero goals and encouraging further green investment within the UK.

Speaking about the funding Councillor Nick Gowrley, Cabinet Member with responsibility for council assets said: "This is a really important step in the council delivering upon its commitment to be net zero by 2030. The estimated cumulative effect of these packages will see the council's carbon footprint reduce by over 360 tonnes of CO₂ per year, the equivalent of taking 120 cars off the road.

The council hopes to have the work completed at all the sites before the 30 September 2021.

Funding breakdown of interest

SCC successful for two packages of work:

£1,546,000 for projects at 9 Maintained Schools

£1,566,000 for projects at 3 Corporate Offices & 4 Fire Stations

Funding contribution from SCC for building fabric and infrastructure upgrade

Packages of work

Corporate Sites including the proposed works.

Endeavour House - Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), Heat Recovery, LED Lighting

Education Sites including proposed works.

Pot Kiln Primary School - ASHP and Solar PV

Estimated Carbon Savings

Corporate Sites: 139.26 tCO₂e pa (Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent per annum)

Education Sites: 222.75 tCO₂e pa

This gives a total combined saving of 362.04 tCO₂e pa the equivalent 120 cars being removed from our roads.

Road resurfacing in Sudbury

A list of roads scheduled for resurfacing see below, half of Gregory Street has already been resurfaced, weather permitting the other half should be completed soon, in red have already been completed, in blue should be completed over the next couple of months weather permitting.

Scheme Ref	Work Type	Road Name	Proposed Construction Start Date
5303	Machine Surfacing	ADDISON ROAD	01 July 2020
5190	Machine Surfacing	GAOL LANE	04 August 2020
5184	Machine Surfacing	GIRLING STREET	11 August 2020
5188	Machine Surfacing	BEACONSFIELD ROAD	30 October 2020
5189	Machine Surfacing	CATS LANE	03 November
5600	Machine Surfacing	NORTHERN ROAD	08 March 2021
23	Machine Surfacing	BALLINGDON HILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	23 April 2021

The problem of HGVs using Station Road to navigate the junction with Friars Street is still unresolved, I have been onto the Highways Safety Team yet again and I am advised that there is no finance available to provide a new sign as the Councillors Highway fund has been frozen, it has been suggested that we should be looking to other funding arrangements including the Town Council funding it.

I have been trying to resolve several Highway and other issues for local people with marginal success as the Annual funding has dried up.

Locality Fund

The Sudbury Gateway Club – to provide Training and to kick start the ‘Gateway Olympian event.

Sudbury Newstalk – To provide the equipment to enable them to be Independent from their Bury group in providing talking newspapers and magazines for the visually impaired.

ActivLives – To provide funding to continue the gardening projects in and around Sudbury for people with learning difficulties.

Jack Owen County Cllr

February 2021 Monthly Town/Parish Newsletter



HANDS **FACE** **SPACE**

#StickWithItSuffolk

Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Automatic Number Plate Recognition to help improve visits to Suffolk's recycling centres

On the 29 January Suffolk County Council announced it will install Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at its recycling centres.

Alongside the installation of an automatic entry system at its recycling centres, these measures are intended to improve customer experience and plan for future demand.

Suffolk has long held ambitions to Create the Greenest County and the Suffolk 2020 fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in community projects, aims to support the council's climate emergency declaration and improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come.

A booking system was introduced at Suffolk's recycling centres in May 2020 when sites reopened following closure at the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown and saw

14,000 visits per week during the summer. This can rise up to 27,000 per week in normal times, without current social distancing rules.

The project is part of the Suffolk 2020 programme and aims to improve the efficiency at the recycling centres by linking the online booking system with automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology and automated entry barriers.

Each of Suffolk County Council's 11 recycling centres had the ANPR technology installed as part of its contract with FCC, who manage and run the sites in Suffolk. The council is now looking to use the technology to further improve the current booking system for residents wishing to visit the centres and make the most of the technological opportunities.

The cameras give an accurate count of vehicle numbers and also record how much time each vehicle is on site. This will allow Suffolk County Council to maximise site availability and to develop new and existing sites to better meet the needs of the increasing population of Suffolk.

Data from the system could also assist in identifying rogue traders fraudulently using the free household waste service to dispose of trade waste. The system also has the facility to link to the DVLA database and identify the type of vehicle and registered keeper details if necessary.

The council will also be working on upgrades to the booking system software to improve the customer experience by making it quicker and easier to make and amend bookings.

Councillor Paul West, Cabinet Member for Waste Services, said:

“We have already seen how well the ‘book a slot’ system has been working in Suffolk, but we know we can make improvements to make the experience for people visiting the sites even quicker and easier.

“By linking the ANPR cameras with the booking system we can speed up the process for customers getting in and out of their recycling centre. The easier we make it for everyone to recycle, the better the outcome for our environment and the people of Suffolk. This approach will help us reduce potential queues at sites, plan site visits and continue to improve the customer experience for everybody using Suffolk’s recycling centres.”

Unique Suffolk project to save up to 600,000 tonnes of water each year

On February 2, a new project was announced that would see water normally pumped into Suffolk's River Deben, now being used in a new scheme near Felixstowe.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of drainage water which fills land near the river's estuary is pumped away. This pumping process can also damage precious saltmarsh and mudflats, which are important habitats and part of the local ecosystem.

But now, the majority of this water is being carefully pumped inland thanks to an innovative project being led locally by Suffolk County Council, Felixstowe Hydrocycle Ltd, the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia.

The water is being reused by local farmers to irrigate food growing on their land and, in the future, can potentially be used in the public water supply.

In the East of England, new ways to source water are necessary because there is a growing demand for more and more water. This is due to future pressures from climate change, the need to supply demand from housing growth, industrial use and agriculture. But with this growing demand, our natural habitats must remain respected and protected.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection said:

"This project is an example of the council's ambition to respond to the climate emergency we declared in March 2019.

"There is a contradiction that we drain this water off our land out into the sea, whilst we experience both droughts and floods. I'm proud that we are pioneering innovative projects like this in Suffolk, which will make water supplies more sustainable, whilst also protecting our natural environment. This is part of the council's Holistic Water Management Project, which I hope inspires other authorities to follow our lead."

Planning permission approved to redevelop Foxhall Recycling Centre.

It was announced on February 3 that plans to expand and improve Foxhall recycling centre had been approved.

This will also involve highway improvements to the site entrance. The benefits of this scheme will:

- Reduce the risk of queueing on the highway at peak times.
- Provide an improved space and layout for easier access.
- Improve accessibility and increase capacity by eliminating the need for site users to climb steps to access containers.
- Improve the Re-use Centre space.
- Introduce greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles.

The new design will provide queuing capacity within the site and improved access from the public highway. The raised level construction will improve access to the containers for site users by removing the need for stairs. It means containers can continue to be emptied without the need to close the site.

Construction will commence this summer (2021) and will be fully operational in autumn 2022. Foxhall is a popular Recycling Centre and the Council's intention is to keep a service running at the site as much as possible whilst construction takes place.

Councillor Paul West, Cabinet Member for Waste, said:

"It's great that we have the green light to go ahead with these planned improvements to the Foxhall Recycling Centre. I'm really looking forward to when the work gets underway later this year.

"These improvements will have a significant impact on the quality of user experience for those visiting the site, making it easier and more accessible while the process for emptying the large containers will become more efficient."

A pre planning public consultation took place last summer, comments and responses were considered as part of the planning application.

Major infrastructure projects now underway in East Anglia

On 4 February work began on two new bridges on the East Anglian coast, promising to bring huge economic benefits locally.

The Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth is managed by Norfolk County Council, and the Gull Wing project in Lowestoft by Suffolk County Council. The projects are just 10 miles apart and have a combined cost of £246m.

The UK Government acknowledged the two bridges as nationally important infrastructure projects, with the Department for Transport committing a combined total of over £170million to both ventures.

Farrans, one of the UK's leading building and civil engineering contractors, is involved with the construction of both projects. In Great Yarmouth, the construction is a joint venture with BAM Nuttall, and in Lowestoft it is the sole responsibility of Farrans.

Road closures for both projects have already been implemented as preparation work gets underway. The Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth will start demolition of some buildings and structures later this month and trial holes for utilities are underway for the Gull Wing in Lowestoft.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

"I'm looking forward to visiting Lowestoft, when it is permitted to do so, to see where work has begun. There will be a lot of preparatory work that goes on behind the scenes and may not be immediately obvious to passers-by, but the Gull Wing is most definitely go. I'm delighted to have delivered my commitment to make the Gull Wing a reality and thank you to East Suffolk Council and all partners for their continued support."

Peter Aldous, MP for Waveney, said:

“It’s an incredibly exciting time for the East Anglian coast, with these much-needed schemes now underway. The Government has committed to levelling up across the country and with these two major projects, we are now starting to see this happen in our region. The Gull Wing will create local jobs and apprenticeship opportunities in Lowestoft and the Waveney area. Local people regularly emphasise the importance of the Gull Wing. It is great news that I shall now be able to tell them that the talking is now over, and the work has begun.”

The Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis CBE, MP for Great Yarmouth, said:

“These are both fantastic projects that will be truly transformational for the whole region. The Third River Crossing will significantly improve traffic flows, which will help residents and visitors to get around as well as bring meaningful benefits to local businesses, especially those in the energy sector.”

Although similar in many respects, the Third River Crossing and Gull Wing are unique projects and will move at different rates throughout their respective construction periods. Both projects aim to open to the public in 2023.

Suffolk County Council complete sale of Chilton Woods land to Taylor Wimpey for future development of a new local community

On 9 February it was announced that the £35m sale of a significant part of the development site at Chilton Woods is now complete.

Situated within the parishes of Chilton, Acton, Sudbury and Long Melford, the Chilton Woods site had been allocated for development in Babergh District Council’s Core Strategy and was granted outline planning permission by Babergh District Council in 2018.

Taylor Wimpey has purchased a portion of the site and will deliver 1,150 new homes, a quarter of which will be affordable for rent or shared ownership.

The housebuilder will also provide a village centre with shops, a pub and a community hall, large areas of new community woodland, land for a new primary school and pre-school, sports pitches, allotments and play areas for young people.

The outline planning permission also includes an employment development, county wildlife site, hotel and household waste recycling centre which Taylor Wimpey will not be delivering. Other landowners have the opportunity to bring forward developments which would be considered by Babergh District in the context of the outline planning permission.

There has been a long-term ambition shared by both the County Council and Babergh District Council to develop this site. The sale completion comes as the result of a great deal of diligent and detailed work led by the County Council and carried out by a number of technical experts and teams, despite the clear and present challenges of working throughout the pandemic over the last 12 months and the national lockdown periods.

The completion of the project demonstrates the County Council's ability to act commercially to help deliver Babergh District Council's objectives and much needed local houses.

The site is some 210 acres, consisting mostly of agricultural land, including part of a former local airfield. Acton Lane runs through the centre of the site, connecting Sudbury to Newman's Green and Acton to the north.

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Housing, Economic Development and Enterprise said:

"Completing the sale of this part of the Chilton Woods site for this price represents a fantastic financial return for the taxpayers of Suffolk. It has been a challenging period of time working around the Covid-19 restrictions and I want to thank all parties involved in getting this sale over the line, especially our advisors from Deloitte Touche, Wood PLC, Birketts Solicitors and Concertus.

"Taylor Wimpey will now take ownership of a significant portion of the site and I look forward to seeing plans and work progress. Development of this site

strengthens our ambition to support the need for increased housing and employment in Suffolk, working with our partners to utilise council owned land where there is local need.”

Suffolk County Council increases budget to support most vulnerable residents and county’s recovery from Covid-19

On February 11, Suffolk County Council agreed its budget for 2021/22.

Following approval of its annual budget, Suffolk County Council is increasing its planned spending once again in 2021/22 to £597.9million, some £41million (7.4%) more than 2020/21. As part of this, the council will be spending £15.3million to address its ongoing Covid-19 costs, arising from the continuing local response to the pandemic. There are no proposed reductions in council services or personnel in 2021/22.

This year’s budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic over the last 11 months or so, the Government has continued to support local authorities as they adapt to serve communities, redeploy staff into alternative specialist roles and see income streams such as business rates and council tax reduce significantly. Suffolk County Council has received around £82.2 million in financial support during 2020 to meet Covid-19 related costs and whilst the challenges of continuing to respond, and in time recover, from Covid-19 remain, significant financial pressures will continue.

The council’s income from council tax is going to be £7.9 million less than expected in 2021/22 and this shortfall will be met by using council reserves. Reserves can only be spent once and do not represent a viable long term financial solution. This effective use of reserves is made possible because Suffolk County Council has maintained a consistent approach to managing its

finances effectively for a number of years, holding a proportionate level of reserves for this exact situation.

In 2021/22, general Council Tax will rise by 1.99 per cent, which represents an increase of £26.68 for a Band D property, from £1,224.70 in 2020, to £1,251.38. There is also a two per cent rise in the Social Care Precept for the forthcoming year as the council recognises the ongoing challenges with meeting the rising costs and rising demand for adult care services. This means a Band D property will see an overall rise of £53.55 this year for Suffolk County Council's element of their Council Tax bill, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.

It is fair to say that the pandemic this year has also significantly impacted the expected progress of the council's recognised transformation programmes, as it has been absolutely necessary to focus on community resilience. This has included redeploying staff into bespoke roles such as procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) to support Suffolk's care sector and adapting working practices for frontline staff to maintain effective social distancing measures. As a result, the council is expecting a shortfall of around £7.8 million in projected savings for 2021. Whilst this means that further work is needed to identify potential future programmes of work, many of the new ways of working adopted by the council during 2020 because of the pandemic may actually offer potential alternative transformation savings as the organisation continues to adapt and tailor the way it works to deliver services for Suffolk's communities.

As part of the meeting, the council's Business Plan for 2021/22 was approved which draws attention to the ambitions for the authority over the next 12 months and its commitment to four key priorities:

- Living with Covid-19 and Suffolk's recovery
- Inclusive Growth
- Health, Care and Wellbeing
- Efficient and Effective Public Services

Throughout the business plan the Council presents its environmental thread demonstrating the range of projects and commitments in place as part of

addressing the climate emergency that was declared in 2019. This includes details of the Council setting its Carbon Budget and the related work involved in achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Highways doubles drainage budget following £27.2m announcement

On February 17 it was announced that Suffolk Highways allocated an extra £2m to support the fight against flooding.

Drainage and flooding, Rights of Way bridges and resurfacing of roads in Suffolk have been allocated extra funds for the 2021/22 financial year following Department for Transport's funding announcement.

Keen to progress more drainage schemes across Suffolk to support the fight against flooding, Suffolk Highways has allocated an extra £2m – double its current budget allocation – in order to help tackle the worsening flood problems being experienced across the county.

Suffolk Highways also looks set to bolster its resource to support in the repairing or replacement of seven Rights of Way bridges across the county with an additional £800k, whilst committing a further £3.4m to the county's surface dressing programme.

Although the budget is less than the 2020/21 allocation, Suffolk Highways prudently prepared for a decrease and allocated a tentative £21m for the 2021/22 financial year.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"Allocating funding for Suffolk's highway budget is a complex process and one we carefully consider ahead of receiving our allocation from the Department for Transport. It's important to ensure our funding is used to focus on current priority areas across the county.

"I am glad our allocation is more than we prepared for the 2021/22 financial year and

I am delighted that we will be able to progress on some much longed for drainage schemes, bridge repair projects, not to mention our bolstered road resurfacing programme – where we have committed to resurfacing a further 140 miles this year.

“Although this funding still represents a fall when compared with last year, we will continue to do what we can to spend this allocation appropriately and for the benefit of all Suffolk’s residents.”

Suffolk County Council pushes ahead to new levels of digital connectivity as it launches sensor "gateway" roll-out.

Suffolk County Council is launching a new initiative on Friday 19th February, deploying ‘gateways’ to build a network that covers all of Suffolk.

This will enable individuals or organisations to measure things like temperature, sound and movement via sensors linked to the Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN).

The network is being built in partnership with Norfolk County Council and funded by the New Anglia LEP. Once finished, the network will be made up of almost 100 ‘gateways’ or data receivers and transmitters fitted to public sector buildings across the county. This will make Suffolk's rollout part of the largest free to use LoRaWAN deployment in the UK. Norfolk County Council launched its part of the network last September.

Businesses and individuals can buy their own sensors, adapt them to measure different things like visitor numbers, weather data and temperature, and tap into the gateways for free.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council said:

"In today's increasingly technological and digital world, it is entirely right that as an authority we do all we can to support local businesses to access and use real time

data to help them succeed. This project has the potential to strengthen businesses, grow our local economy and help support the jobs and innovations of the future.

"I really do hope that as many people as possible come along to the launch event so that they can see how this technology could benefit their business."

16 new COVID-19 rapid testing centres to open in Suffolk

On the 19 January it was announced that a further 16 rapid testing centres for COVID-19 were to open in Suffolk, bringing the total number of centres to 28.

The sites are planned to open over the next two weeks in Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth, Southwold, Aldeburgh, Saxmundham, Debenham, Framlingham, Woodbridge, Eye, Holbrook, Needham Market, Elmswell, Hadleigh, Nayland and Brandon - serving more rural communities across the county.

The 28 centres use 'lateral flow' testing to identify people who may have coronavirus but who do not have symptoms. The tests are for people who do not have symptoms of coronavirus and cannot work from home.

It's because one in three people with coronavirus do not have symptoms so regular testing is vital in breaking the chain of infection and keeping Suffolk safe.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Suffolk County Council's leader and chair of the Suffolk Local Outbreak Engagement Board, said:

"Testing is a key weapon in the battle against COVID-19, so we are delighted to be able to open a further 16 sites in more rural communities across Suffolk.

"Whilst Suffolk's vaccine rollout programme rapidly picks up pace, we need people who can't work from home and who don't have symptoms to get tested twice a week. It's how we will break the chain of infections and protect vulnerable people.

"It takes just 15 minutes to get a test and you get the results within the hour. 12,780 tests have already been completed. Suffolk needs everyone to play their part."

All 28 centres are listed on Suffolk County Council's website, including their addresses and opening times. The testing sites are operated on behalf of Suffolk County Council (SCC). Tests should be booked online or by phone in advance.

Employers are being urged to encourage their staff to book regular testing.

There are already 12 facilities open, including at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, the STEM Centre in Western Way at West Suffolk College, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill Arts Centre, St Etheldreda's parish centre in Newmarket, and Kirkley & Pakefield FC in Lowestoft.

New hedgerow planted in Great Barton as part of Suffolk 2020 tree planting programme to increase biodiversity

On February 22, a new mixed-species hedgerow was planted in Great Barton as part of Suffolk County Council's Suffolk 2020 project.

This project seeks to plant 100,000 trees and 15 kilometres of hedgerow over the next 12 months. This will create new habitats and wildlife corridors in multiple areas of Suffolk to support local biodiversity. It is the first of six farms on the Council's County Farm estate to benefit from the planting of new hedgerows this winter.

Suffolk County Council is working closely with the Woodland Trust, the Suffolk Tree Warden Network, local landowners and contractors, and its County Farm tenants, to deliver this ambitious project. Giles Landscapes are undertaking the hedge planting during February and March, which will total around 10 Kilometres (just over six miles) of new hedgerow, consisting of around 50,000 plants of mixed native species such as hawthorn, field maple, hazel and dogwood.

Hedgerows are important features of Suffolk's agricultural landscape, providing a habitat for many species and 'corridors' for wildlife to move through them. All the the planting stock being used is UK sourced and grown to reduce plant health risks and

improve biosecurity, with much of the stock being supplied by The Woodland Trust. Local straw mulch is being used to reduce competition from weeds and to help retain moisture as the hedges become established. The tenant farmers will continue to maintain the hedgerows located on their land. As part of the preparation for this project, 40 miles of existing hedges were surveyed with a drone and on foot by a local specialist company based in Suffolk, Hardy Woodlands and Forestry, utilising a range of mapping technology to provide data to the project team.

Graham Borley, tenant farmer at Great Barton said:

"I welcome the planting of these new hedgerows on the land I farm and I think Giles Landscaping have done an excellent job. I look forward to seeing them flourish over time and provide a home for a range of wildlife and other wild flowers and plants. I'm pleased to play a part in helping local biodiversity."

Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council, said:

"I'm really pleased to see the first new hedgerow established as part of the Suffolk 2020 tree planting project. The team is now working its way across the county to plant similar areas of hedgerow."

"This project is directly linked to the motion I seconded at Full Council in December when I was very pleased to see all councillors who attended the meeting, offer their full support to increase Suffolk's biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations. The Council is committed to continuing to lead by example through the use of our land by adopting biodiversity-friendly land management practices where possible."

"I want to thank all partners involved in this project, it is a real Suffolk team effort and with the support of landowners, tenants, local communities and contractors, Tree Wardens and The Woodland Trust we are making a real difference. I hope our efforts encourage more of Suffolk's farmers to invest in their hedges and conservation management."

Suffolk County Council's cabinet confirms its support for Freeport East

On February 23, the cabinet of the county council confirmed its support for the creation of a new Freeport (Freeport East).

The Freeport would cover both the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich as part of the Government's aim to create a number of Freeports across the country to drive job creation, investment and international trade post Brexit.

A Freeport includes secure customs zones and tax sites where business can be carried out inside a country's land border, but where different tax and customs rules apply. These rules mean Freeports can potentially reduce administrative burdens and tariff controls, provide relief from duties, import taxes, and ease tax and planning regulations.

Freeport East has several unique aspects which make its bid for Freeport status particularly strong. This includes global and regional connectivity, with 36% of all the UK's container traffic passing through the Port of Felixstowe, unrivalled international connections, particularly with Asia, strong connectivity to the Midlands and the North, thereby supporting the government's "levelling up agenda" in these areas. The bid also stands out as supporting other national objectives such as the development of new technology and the push for clean energy. The Port of Felixstowe has recently won funding to trial a pilot 5G network and has strong research and development links with Cambridge and Essex Universities. There are also strong links with the energy sector and the emerging hydrogen economy.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council said:

"Suffolk County Council fully supports a bid for a Freeport in our county, this is especially true of Freeport East as so much of the bid is in line with the council's wider objectives around inclusive economic growth, job creation, regional investment and our commitments to the environment and decarbonisation.

"Freeport East is a fantastic opportunity for the Government to show that its commitment to levelling up the country is not just reserved for the Midlands and the North of England. To level up successfully the government must recognise the importance of investing in the foundations of growth and wider opportunities at both ends of the A14. This is especially true considering that many of the businesses based here are directly responsible for jobs and investment in the North of England, not to mention the reliance on the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich to export goods made in the North to the rest of the world.

"Whilst the final decision about Freeport designation rests with central government, I urge everyone in Suffolk, especially community and business leaders, to give this bid their wholehearted support."

The Government is due to make its final decision about Freeport status later this year after assessment of all bids received nationwide in March.

Babergh District Council Report**Councils pledge to provide further financial support for struggling households**

Thousands of households across Babergh and Mid Suffolk will be eligible for a reduction in their council tax bill after councillors approved further support for residents facing financial difficulties.

Last year, the Government announced a new Hardship Fund to help households already in receipt of means-tested working age Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). This enabled a reduction of up to £150 to be automatically applied to council tax bills for these households – ensuring the districts' most financially vulnerable residents had nothing to pay in 2020/21.

Councils were required to hold back enough Hardship Fund to make this same relief available to any new customers who claimed LCTS throughout the council tax year. However, as the year end approaches, there is still some funding remaining and so the councils have taken the decision to reduce council tax bills even more.

Both councils will now award further Hardship Relief to eligible residents who have received LCTS against their council tax liability for 2020/21. Households who are affected will automatically receive an adjusted bill – there is no requirement to apply.

Any Hardship Fund remaining, after applying the additional award, will be used to fund Discretionary Financial Assistance for residents in exceptional circumstances. Further information about this support can be found on Babergh District Council's website and Mid Suffolk District Council's website.

Covid support grants for businesses

There are several business support grants available which cover different local and national lockdown periods. For businesses mandated to close (including those in retail, leisure and hospitality) that have applied and received a lockdown grant since November 2020, our plan is to automatically pay additional grants following pre-payment checks.

However, for businesses that may be eligible but have not heard from us, or are yet to apply for any grants, we are encouraging them to find out more and to submit an application form as soon as possible. Further information about all the covid business support grants can be found on our grant funding schemes webpage

Babergh budgets for financial stability and sustainability

Councillors have agreed Babergh District Council's budget for 2021/22 – delivering financial stability post-Covid while still delivering the council's commitment to climate change.

The budget was agreed at the February Full Council increases Babergh's share of council tax by 2.96%, the equivalent of less than 10p a week (£5 a year) for an average Band D property.

The increase is part of a package of measures that will allow the council to meet the medium-term financial challenges presented by the pandemic; help meet its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030; and maintain services for residents and communities.

In addition to the council tax increase, the budget will also include a proposed increase of £2.50 a year to the annual brown bin garden waste subscriptions, taking the cost from £52.50 to £55 – the equivalent of an extra 10p per collection.

Residents can check their details and let the council know of any changes 24/7 by signing up for an online account via the website. Through an online account, residents can opt for paperless billing, check their balance, see instalments, update their details and see council tax reduction and housing benefit claim information as well as viewing bills online. You can find out more here.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have confirmed their support for Freeport East.

The bid, which includes Gateway 14 in Stowmarket, has been formally submitted to Government by Hutchinson Ports.

The government's Freeports initiative will allow firms to import goods and then re-export them outside normal tax and customs rules. The Government plan is to have 10 Freeports designated across the UK by the end of the year. Successful bidders will be announced in Spring 2021.

The Freeport East ambition is to create manufacturing, green energy and innovation hubs that capitalise on the unique qualities of the Eastern Region and will become an important part of our regions post-Covid recovery.

Further information about can be found by visiting the Freeport East website.

While writing this report I am thrilled to report that as announced in the budget Harwich and Felixstowe has been selected as one of the eight identified Freeports.

Everyone will benefit from Census 2021

Households across Babergh will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

The Postbox Project

Many of our residents will have experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness since the Covid pandemic began. To combat this we've partnered with The Forge Church and Suffolk County Council to launch The Postbox Project. Our aim is to connect people across Suffolk, using letter writing to build new friendships. We are currently recruiting volunteers to write letters, so if you can spare a little time, please let us know. Alternatively, if you're aware of someone who is experiencing loneliness and would benefit from a letter, you can refer them directly to the project.

Belle Vue

March Cabinet will be considering objections (32 in total) to the disposal of the house and part of the old pool site. Objections include from loss of open space, to planning matters, to views on the

future uses of the whole site or just the house, and on marketing period and process. The Cabinet report is public except the appendix containing confidential bid detail.

If deciding to progress with a disposal then Cabinet will continue to consider six bids received by informal tender by 12th February 2021 and are recommended to select a preferred bidder for best value, although there is no obligation on Cabinet to select any of the bids for progression.

All proposals are subject to planning and all bids received include retaining/refurbishing/re-purposing the house in some form. The bids are varied for a range of residential, care and retirement or community uses.

Councillors will also be considering a recommendation of diverting up to 100% from any sale proceeds into the creation of a new accessible park entrance/café/toilets so the park amenities and local community and visitors will be directly benefitted from any capital receipt.

From: Jan Osborne (Cllr)

Sent: 26 February 2021 11:10

To: Jan Osborne (Cllr) <Jan.Osborne@babergh.gov.uk>

Cc: Ciaran Griffin <Ciaran.Griffin@sudburytowncouncil.co.uk>; Elisabeth Malvisi (Cllr) <Elisabeth.Malvisi@babergh.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Car Park charges

Dear Jack.

All is explained in the report that went to Cabinet and was approved on the 4th February.

However to explain, each of the towns and villages that make up Babergh are different and the proposals for each car park are also bespoke to reflect the different needs and challenges in that place. Appendix E in the report describes these differences in detail.

The proposals are designed to help reduce the environmental impacts of travel, such as air quality, by helping to reduce congestion; whilst also supporting and growing the commercial vitality of Babergh's towns and improving the public spaces and streetscape.

The report that went to Cabinet was informed by an independent parking study, commissioned by the Council. This was carried out in February 2020 (pre-Covid) and it reviewed stay durations, capacity, turnover and occupancy of the car parks.

In addition, the revised charging proposals are designed to reduce the current subsidy so that it is the motorist who pays for more of the cost of our parking provision rather than all tax payers.

Sudbury and Hadleigh are very different in size and needs and as you are aware Sudbury is a great deal bigger than Hadleigh and has more car parks. Therefore the demand from users on the car parks is greater, as well as the cost for maintaining and administering the car parks in Sudbury is more than that in Hadleigh.

The recommendations for Sudbury in the report, and in particular the introduction of some short term parking charges, are therefore designed to help investment in the facilities, to make best use of the space available, turning over spaces in the town centre, enabling more stays during the daytime. Where a space could be re-used up to 4 or 5 times a day, rather than car idling or driving around the town trying to find a space. These are drivers that are already trying to access parking spaces, not future growth. The proposals will also help encourage not using a car at all for some trips (where possible) and use of alternative parking for longer stays. The revised approach to charging is designed to help influence public behaviour in this way as well as provide better facilities for our users.

There is a need to ensure our car parks are safe and welcoming to those who use them. Appendix A in the report details the amount of investment needed to bring our car parks up to date.

In Hadleigh, the survey showed that availability of spaces was good at various times, but that it is clearly in need of investment in terms of machines, groundworks, signage and lines. Short term charges, alongside the current long term charges, would help towards this much needed investment.

Keep safe.

Jan