



Feb 2019 Parish Newsletter
Cllr Karen Soons
karensoons@aol.com
07864 601 887

Green light to develop more specialist education placements in Suffolk

On 29 January 2019, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet agreed recommendations to move forward with creating more specialist education places in Suffolk.

Suffolk will need between 300 to 400 places for children with additional needs between now and 2020, and this figure is likely to continue to increase. The demand for specialist education places in Suffolk is rising rapidly due to the county's population growth, advances in medicine, and the increasing complexity of specialist needs.

The recommendations include three new special schools and 36 specialist units attached to existing mainstream schools, which combined will create over 800 new specialist education places in the county. The Cabinet also agreed that a clarified education pathway for specialist provision is created to assist families in understanding what the local offer is.

Following the approval of the recommendations, the proposal to borrow up to £45.1 million to fund the new places will now go to the county council's Capital Strategy Group to be reviewed. If agreed, the decision will go back to Cabinet in the Spring for final sign-off so the recommendations can be rolled out.

Councillor Gordon Jones, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for children's services, education and skills, said:

"I welcome today's decision. Suffolk County Council is committed to ensuring all of Suffolk's children and young people are able to attend a good local school, one that meets their individual needs and supports them to achieve their full potential regardless of the challenges they may face.

"The decision today will help to create hundreds of more specialist school places across the county, reducing our dependence on placements outside of Suffolk, which come at a high cost, and transforming the experience of education for our children and young people with SEND."

Suffolk's roads warming to £300,000 thermal patching technology

Suffolk Highways is celebrating road repair success following a £300,000 investment in Nu-phalt Thermal Patching technology.

The investment, which has been funded from the extra £9.67 million received from central government in the autumn, has aided the county's Highways teams to carry out more effective, longer-lasting repairs to Suffolk's road surface.

Over the last month, Suffolk Highways has deployed three thermal road repair machines which have repaired approximately 1,700 potholes county-wide.

The process includes an eight-minute heating cycle of the road surrounding the defect allowing for the existing road surface to be heated to 200 Celsius. The surface is then raked, topped up with bitumen binder and pre-heated material, then compacted. This all takes place within the service's much-favoured 15-minute temporary closure.

The process does not require excavation of the highway, meaning no dust or noise, and better still, no waste material. The result also means there are no surface joints, which can be prone to faster deterioration.

Following its success, Suffolk Highways is now looking to accommodate this technology by adapting some of its own fleet to self-deliver this repair technique from March.

Beyond the investment in Nu-phalt Thermal Patching technology, the £9.67m of funding will enable a programme of work. This includes improvements and repairs to the pavements in the town centres of Stowmarket, Felixstowe and Haverhill and drainage work to solve long-term flooding problems on the A12 – Wangford bypass, the A143 – Bury St Edmunds Compiegne Way, and the A1120 – Cedars Link Stowmarket. The funding will also be used for better quality, long-lasting white lining on the:

- A146 Lowestoft
- A1092
- A1021
- A1141
- A1095
- A1120.

On rural roads, when preparing roads for next summer's surface dressing, the funding will allow for work to clear drains and gullies, cut back hedges, cut grips and clean signs.

Department for Education recognises outstanding performance by Suffolk students

On 24 January 2019, the Department for Education published revised GCSE and A Level results.

GCSE

Suffolk has risen in national league tables for students in the county achieving the standard GCSE pass in English and Maths.

Today's validated figures from the Department for Education confirm that 1% more students in Suffolk are achieving the expected standards in English and Maths at GCSE compared with last year.

Since 2015 there has been 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 (a standard pass) 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.

64% of students in Suffolk are now achieving the expected standard in English and Maths, putting Suffolk in the top half of authorities achieving this standard.

GCSE progress remains above average and Suffolk students have seen a steep increase this year with a Progress 8 score of +0.08, compared with -0.02 nationally. This figure puts Suffolk in the number 1 position in our statistical neighbour group.

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. Suffolk is in the top half of authorities for this figure, ranked 42nd out of 151.

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils in the county achieving the standard pass in English and Maths is in line with national figures. The Progress 8 figure for disadvantaged pupils is also above the national level and is in the top half of authorities, ranked 42nd out of 151 (up from 67th in 2016).

A Level

The validated A Level figures confirm that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the number of A*- E grades remaining above the national average figures.

The figures show that 98.1% of A Levels taken in the county have been awarded an A*-E grade, compared to 97.6% nationally. 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 A Level average points per entry this year has risen by 0.3 to 30.3 compared with this time last year.

10,000 Suffolk homes say 'no' to cold callers on their doorsteps

Suffolk Trading Standards recently gave out its 10,000th No Cold Calling sticker, just four years after launching the campaign.

The stickers are placed on a homeowner's front door to declare that the resident does not want uninvited traders to call at their property.

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, state that traders who approach a resident after having seen the sticker, are committing an offence.

Further details on No Cold Calling zones and how to get a No Cold Calling sticker can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk.

Energy project awards its 100th grant to help businesses be more environmentally friendly

On 2 January 2019, it was reported that 100 Norfolk and Suffolk businesses have now received a grant from The Business Energy Efficiency (BEE) Anglia project. The project provides free support to eligible organisations to help them become more energy efficient.

Screenworks Limited, one of the UK's leading promotional textile suppliers based in Haverhill, recently received the 100th grant having successfully applied for £16,240 to help fund two new gas dryers. This new equipment will provide huge energy saving results, reduce their carbon footprint by 21 tonnes and cut costs by £5,700 every year.

The BEE Anglia project has now delivered £540,000 in similar grants, with £1.8million spent in total on green projects. Local organisations are still able to apply for these grants.

Grant funding is just one of the ways that the BEE Anglia project supports businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and save money. It also offers free energy reviews and the chance for organisations to work towards a Carbon Charter.

Businesses interested in the BEE Anglia Project can find out more and register online www.beeanglia.org or call 01473 350370.