



Anne Whybrow

Bosmere

January Newsletter

Covering Badley, Barking, Battisford, Baylham, Combs, Great Bricett,

Little Finborough, Needham Market, Nettlestead, Offton,

Ringshall, Somersham, and Willisham



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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 starts today (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 (link to go live at 5.00pm)

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 <u><i>Eriswell Road, Lakenheath IP27 9AF</i></u>	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 is chosen as one of only 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 today 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

Additional £21million to resurface and repair Suffolk's roads

Suffolk County Council has announced new plans to invest an additional £21million in resurfacing and repairing the county's roads in the next three years. The plans, revealed as part of a report recommending what the council's budget for 2018/19 should be, will see 1,000 miles of roads in Suffolk resurfaced by March 2021, a quarter of all the roads that Suffolk County Council is responsible for. This is a commitment made in the council's Our Priorities report published in 2017. This investment would improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and enhance the experience of Suffolk's road users. It also makes sound financial sense as preventing deterioration will avoid the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance over the same period and in future years. Over 227 miles of Suffolk roads were surface dressed or machined surfaced during the summer of 2017. The funding will boost Suffolk Highways' road maintenance and improvement spending in 2018/19 alone by 21% - £40m in total.

The money is still to be approved by councillors at both Cabinet and Full Council meetings between now and February 2018. If approved, the £21m will be specifically targeted at maintaining Suffolk's existing road network. Confirming this investment now will enable Suffolk Highways to start planning and preparing this financial year to carry out the additional works across the next three years, based on a thorough assessment of need.

The extra money will be allocated to roads and infrastructure where there is the greatest need. These works will be planned carefully to make the most of the warmer summer weather when surface dressing needs to be done and conditions are the best for machine surfacing. This work will be fully co-ordinated to reduce the impact on road users. It's not possible to confirm the locations of this work at this early stage. Assessments will be made by skilled technical officers using all of the data and information that is available to them.