

January 2018 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk school travel consultation launched

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. 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 SCC 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 SCC 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 SCC.

SCC 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 and the consultation runs until 28 February 2018 and there is a full programme of consultation workshops around the county and opportunities for discussion.

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. 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. 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.

Ground investigations for Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings to begin

Structural and environmental tests to finalise the detailed design for the Upper Orwell Crossings in Ipswich are to begin early this year. 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

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