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Suffolk County Council Report November 2021

New Suffolk campaign asks ‘What’s It Worth?’ to keep virus safe this winter

- High COVID cases and critical pressure on hospitals as Suffolk becomes an Enhanced Response Area
- New public safety campaign aims to get people to consider what small acts they can do now to keep safe and enjoying the things they love most

The Suffolk Resilience Forum has today launched a new campaign asking people what motivates them to follow the actions that best reduce the spread of Covid-19 and other viruses this winter.

The ‘What’s It Worth?’ campaign encourages people to consider what small acts they can do now, such as wearing a mask or regular testing, so we can continue enjoying the things we all love doing – like going to the pub, meeting friends and having family for dinner.

It comes as Suffolk becomes an Enhanced Response Area (ERA) because of high covid rates and increasing pressure on the NHS. Suffolk is currently seeing 400 new cases each day, with particularly high rates in Ipswich and West Suffolk, especially in the over 60s age range.

Face masks back as additional measures brought in to reduce Covid-19 transmission in Suffolk schools and education settings

Face masks and restrictions on visitors are to be reintroduced to Suffolk schools to help slow the current rate of transmission in education settings.

SCC are advising that the following measures be implemented from the 1 November 2021.

- **Staff** in all education settings (primary, secondary, and higher education) to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- **Students** in all secondary and higher education settings to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- All education settings to restrict entry to their site to essential visitors only.
- Any visitors to wear a face covering while on-site, this includes adults collecting children in the playground.

On October 6, SCC introduced a new sibling policy, which advised children and young people aged between 4 and 18 years to stay at home when a sibling they live with tests positive for COVID-19. This applies to schools with an outbreak of Covid-19 and is still in place.

The number of cases within children and young people aged 10-14 has increased by almost 15% and cases amongst 15–19-year-olds has increased by 32% in the past week of data. This means that in October alone schoolchildren in Suffolk have lost 26,264 days of education due to positive cases of Covid-19. There has also been an increase in cases amongst other age ranges across Suffolk, which may be due in part, to family transmission.

These measures will be reviewed during the week commencing Monday 15 November 2021.

Planning permission granted for new recycling centre in Haverhill

Plans to build a new recycling centre in Haverhill have been approved.

Suffolk County Council and its partner FCC Environment, which manages all of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres, are to relocate the Chalkstone Way Recycling Centre to a new site within FCC's Waste Transfer Station at Homefield Road.

Permission has been granted by county council planners for the new recycling centre, together with the granting of an environmental permit, which will eventually replace the current centre in Chalkstone Way.

Construction for the new site is currently out to tender, with work anticipated to start this winter and opening expected to be during 2022.

The site will feature a modern split-level recycling centre designed to make access for residents easier and to maximize the recycling of household waste.

The benefits of this scheme will be:

- A new, purpose-designed recycling centre
- A raised mezzanine platform to provide customers with an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste - removing the need for steps
- An easy-to-use layout allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- Reduced queuing on the highway
- Removing the need to close the facility to service the containers
- Improving accessibility and increasing capacity
- Introducing greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles
- A covered facility

The new design will provide queuing capacity within the site and improved access from the public highway compared to the Chalkstone Way site.

The raised level construction will improve access to the containers for site users by removing the need for stairs. It also means containers can continue to be emptied without the need to close the site.

The replacement recycling centre will overcome increasing demand at Chalkstone Way and meet the needs created by forecasted housing growth in the area.

The waste transfer station – which takes waste collected locally and prepares it for either disposal or recycling – will continue to operate at Homefield Road.

Cabinet backs £50 million bid to boost Suffolk bus services

A £50 million bid to transform bus services in Suffolk has been backed by county councillors. Wider coverage, cheaper fares, improved ticketing, and better evening and weekend services are among proposals under the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) approved by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet today and which will now be submitted to the Government by the end of the month.

Following on from the submission of the BSIP, the council, bus operators and other stakeholders will work together to establish a countywide Enhanced Partnership.

This will enable the BSIP proposals to be delivered, building on experience gained from the existing Ipswich Quality Bus Partnership.

The funding bid is being made to the government's £3 billion fund under its Bus Back Better national bus strategy for England outside of London.

SCC will be asking for a minimum of £50m over three years - £15m each for the first two years and £20m for the third.

Youth Focus Suffolk puts young people at the heart

It has been announced by Suffolk County Council that 18 youth projects from across the county have been awarded a share of just under £240,000 to respond to the gaps faced after covid for activities and services for young people.

Almost 2.5 times over-subscribed, the Youth Intervention Fund, hosted by Suffolk Community Foundation, attracted an array of bids and has successfully granted both rural and urban projects from Lowestoft to Newmarket, Hadleigh to Eye.

It is expected that an additional 1,900 young people will benefit from these activities offered through the voluntary and community sector over the next 12 months and the schemes include performing arts to increase confidence, mentoring programmes to support mental health, forest schools and construction skills.

More information about the project, and resources to support those working with young people, can be found at the new online platform www.youthfocus.suffolk.gov.uk

Work begins to replace street lights in Suffolk and save energy in the County

Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Bouygues Energies & Services (Bouygues E&S) have started work replacing 43,400 street lighting lanterns in Suffolk with LED lanterns.

SCC and Bouygues E&S joined forces to create a flagship partnership with the aim of reducing energy, minimising light pollution, bringing down ongoing maintenance costs for the Authority and providing the best value to residents. SCC expects to reduce its annual electricity costs on these assets by around 76 percent, saving more than 1.7 million pounds a year.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights. This smart technology will increase the control the Authority has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

Illegal Cigarettes Seized in Trading Standards Crackdown

Thousands of illegal cigarettes have been seized from shops in Lowestoft and Beccles as part of a Trading Standards crackdown.

More than 12,000 cigarettes were sniffed out by tobacco detection dogs at three shops in the town, with over 8000 of the cigarettes and 8kg of hand rolled tobacco found under a manhole cover in the rear of one the premises.

The operation was supported by Suffolk Police, Norfolk Trading Standards and Wagtail UK.

A total of 12,440 cigarettes and 18.45kg of hand rolled tobacco were seized from the stores. All the items are suspected to be illegally imported into the UK without duty being paid and do not comply with the legal packaging and labelling requirements.

Several of them are also suspected to be counterfeits of popular brands, which are likely to contain harmful substances and may not self-extinguish - presenting increased health and safety risks.

The seized products will now be fully assessed as part of the investigation to determine the exact offences that have been committed.

Test purchases had been carried out before the raids with all three selling to covert officers.

People are urged to look for:

- Packaging that is not plain olive green
- A lack of health warnings
- Text on the packet that is not in English
- Cheap prices
- Unknown brands

If you suspect someone is selling illegal tobacco in Suffolk, please report it to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Suffolk demonstrates commitment to Climate Emergency through Public Sector Leaders Group

As part of their meeting today, Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders committed to accelerate efforts across the county towards delivering the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan that will set Suffolk on the path for carbon neutrality by 2030.

A key forthcoming campaign will focus on helping people understand what simple changes they can make to their home to help reduce carbon emissions, including details of what help and support is available across Suffolk.

Chair of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, Cllr Suzie Morley said: “Every organisation in Suffolk has its own plan to deliver against this important agenda, and as a group we are fully committed towards working collaboratively to address the Climate Emergency declared in 2019. The forthcoming COP26 event will be a significant moment in the race to achieve Net Zero for Suffolk, as well as its impact at national and international level. In the run-up to the conference, Suffolk has been hosting a number of different events to keep the climate emergency at the forefront of people’s minds. Suffolk recently welcomed the Zero Carbon Tour, a roadshow led by an electric bus visiting places around the country on its way to COP26 in Glasgow.

“We are now investing this funding in a number of key projects including the delivery of a range of communication channels to inform and support Suffolk’s residents so they find out how to access online services and resources to help us all make a positive change.

“Everybody can play their part in helping us achieve our Net Zero ambitions across the county.”

During the meeting, leaders also discussed the continued work of the Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund (SIGIF) which was established in September 2020 to support the investment in positive economic growth across Suffolk’s towns and business communities.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fund is providing a catalyst for Suffolk’s economic recovery and investment support as part of Suffolk’s public sector commitment to addressing many of the challenges that local businesses, individuals and communities are currently experiencing.

Since the fund began, it has supported 12 projects with over £1million, with more to follow as part of future allocations. The Fund is managed by Suffolk Growth on behalf of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Suffolk continues to create the greenest county with £150,000 for new trees

A joint bid by a number of Suffolk’s authorities has secured funding from the Forestry Commission to plant around 3,000 trees this coming planting season.

Suffolk County Council submitted the bid on behalf of itself, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk District Council. The successful bid will see £149,712.55 come into the county for new trees, from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund.

The fund targets treescapes that have been neglected or suffered damage in the past, including disused and vacant community spaces and those affected by tree diseases such as ash dieback. The locations are chosen where they are likely to be experienced directly by people, as well as on improving the age structure of trees in all the project areas.

One of the interesting methods being adopted to re-establish woodland as part of this project, is the Miyawaki method.

It is regarded as one of the most effective tree planting methods for creating cover quickly on neglected land, or land that has previously been used for construction or agriculture. It uses natural principles, such as using trees already native to the area and replicating natural regeneration processes, and is particularly effective in the urban environment.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:

“I’m delighted to have secured this funding, as it means Suffolk will benefit from even more tree planting this coming season and we can make more progress towards the county’s joint ambition of Net Zero by 2030. We are also supporting our wildlife and biodiversity, and offering more green spaces for people to get in touch with nature and support their health and wellbeing.

“Last year, the county council committed £228,000 to treeplanting and hedgerows, with 100,000 planted already and the same amount to be planted this coming season. With the Suffolk Tree Warden Network, we are following the ‘right tree, right place’ policy, to be sure that the planting is effective and has the best chance of establishing itself.”

One example of tree-planting with this project, is the planting of over 100 trees at Needham Lake. The lake is actually a flooded gravel pit close to Needham Market, with part of the site a nature reserve with wetland areas, meadows and a small woodland. The project will create an area of wet woodland alongside the river to link two small, wooded areas together. The trees will include Alder, Downy Birch, White and Grey Willow.

The planting will also contribute to Suffolk’s commitment to support the Queen’s Green Canopy project. Suffolk is working towards linking up existing woodland with the planting of new trees and hedges to connect communities and encourage natural corridors for biodiversity, aiming to plant a tree for every resident.