

October 2018 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Have your say on a bright future for local design

Inspired by award-winning designer Wayne Hemingway, a ground-breaking "Design Guide" for building and development is being created by the county's local authorities. Critical to its success will be local input and, with this in mind, a survey was launched on 17 September to ensure that the views of Suffolk people play a key role in future decisions. The survey asks people to say what they do and don't like about the way Suffolk is currently built, from its public buildings to street lighting. The survey, which takes as little as 10 minutes to complete, closes on 31 October 2018. Although other counties have produced similar guides, this will be the first that incorporates the wishes and opinions of the people that matter most: those that live (or have lived) in, work in or visit the county. The survey is just the start of the process and the councils will work with other public bodies, land owners, developers, parish councils, architects, engineers, artists, and amenity groups to finalise the finished guide. A wide range of events will also take place including conferences, study tours, community events, developer meetings and interactive exercises. The Suffolk Design Guide will provide ground rules for planning applications for future Suffolk projects.

Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places

Parents and carers can now apply for primary and secondary school places for September 2019. The deadline for applications to secure a place at a Suffolk secondary school is 31 October 2018. For a primary school it is 15 January 2019. Secondary schools include high and upper schools and primary schools includes infant, junior and middle schools. Last year SCC received over 15,000 applications with 93% of applicants receiving offers for their first preference school and more than 98% of applicants receiving an offer for one of their top three preferred schools. This year, parents and carers will also need to consider the changes to Suffolk's School Travel Policy, which were agreed by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on 19 June 2018. The new policy will assess eligibility for funded school travel to the nearest suitable school with a place available. Parents and carers should apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions . A completed application must be submitted for every child wanting a secondary school place or a primary school place from September 2019

New support for those bereaved by suicide

On 10 September 2018, Suffolk's suicide prevention steering group announced it will be launching a new service to support individuals, families and others bereaved by suicide. The 12-month pilot service will be joint funded by Suffolk County Council (SCC) Public Health and Ipswich & East Suffolk and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The total funding for the service is £30,000, with Suffolk County Council providing £22,000 and CCGs funding £8,000. The service will be operated by Listening Ear. They will work in close partnership with the police, coroner service and other partners to offer support following notification of a suspected suicide, including one-to-one individual support, practical help and signposting to local services that can help. When the new service launches, it will be widely advertised in Suffolk with options for self-referral and referral by professionals. Suffolk's suicide prevention strategy was launched in October 2016 with the aim of reducing the number of suicides in Suffolk by 10% by 2021 which, in Suffolk, would equate to six deaths a year. Since then, more than 400 people in Suffolk have been trained to prevent suicide and 150 have become "Suffolk Life Savers" as part of a far-reaching campaign to reduce the number of people in the county who take their own lives. The suicide prevention partnership comprises health and wellbeing partners including SCC Public Health, police, coroner, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Samaritans, Suffolk Mind, Healthwatch Suffolk and others.

New approach agreed for the development of specialist education placements in Suffolk

On 11 September, SCC Cabinet agreed a recommendation to introduce a new approach to the development of specialist education placements for children and young people. The need will be met in Suffolk by developing a combination of new specialist support centres and new special schools, using independent placements from private providers for only a small number of very specialist needs. The demand for specialist education places in Suffolk is rising rapidly due to the county's population growth, advances in medicine and increasing complexity of special educational needs. The challenges Suffolk is facing mirror the national picture. Work has already taken place in the county to deal with the increase in demand for specialist education places. A new special school in Lowestoft opened in September 2017 and following Department for Education approval another special school will open in Ipswich in 2020. Several of the county's existing special schools have expanded and a new campus with additional space for Riverwalk School in Bury St Edmunds opened this September.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk