

## **February 2023 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks**

### **Temporary changes with next phase of £7.8m redevelopment of Foxhall Recycling Centre**

Users of Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich are being advised of major works that will temporarily mean fewer parking spaces and reduced access as part of a £7.8 million redevelopment programme. Starting on January 26 this phase of work is scheduled to last until the summer and will raise the site level to allow for the removal of steps when using containers for recycling, making it easier for users and improving access from Foxhall Road. The redeveloped Foxhall Recycling Centre will provide increased capacity for vehicles on site, reduced queuing, improved access from Foxhall Road, and greater capacity to meet future growth. It is the largest part of the construction work taking place and will temporarily limit the amount of space available for public use. During this time, cars and car-derived vans, plus those with small trailers, can continue to use the site as usual through the [online booking system](#). However, vans, vans with trailers, cars with large trailers and trade waste must use an alternative site. There will also be no collection bins for textiles, glass, or paper recycling at Foxhall during this time. The redevelopment of Foxhall began last October and, once complete, will provide increased capacity for vehicles on site, reduced queuing, improved access from Foxhall Road, and greater capacity to meet future growth. This phase also sees the recycling centre's charity Re-use Shop temporarily re-locate to The Ancient House in Ipswich. The shop on site closes from January 23 and will open at the Ancient House on January 30. It is anticipated to move back to site in the spring. Once complete the redeveloped Foxhall site will be a state-of-the-art facility serving the people of Suffolk for many years to come. This is a big project and we are doing everything we can to minimise disruption to users, and while we are sorry for any inconvenience we must introduce these measures as a result of the work required. I would urge users to please be patient and to plan well in advance if they need to use this, or other, sites.

### **Fire service celebrates Government inspection outcome**

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been rated "Good" for its effectiveness and how well it manages staff by inspectors from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). An independent inspection undertaken last spring saw inspectors conduct a comprehensive review of SFRS from how it responds to emergencies to its equality, diversity, and inclusion policies. Colleagues from across SFRS were involved throughout the inspection process to give an accurate representation of the service. HMICFRS praised many aspects of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, with inspectors highlighting that "the service is good at identifying risk in the communities it serves" and "works well with others to reduce the number of fires." The report adds that "SFRS is good for how it promotes the right values and culture. There is a positive working culture throughout the service." Inspectors also commented that "a culture of continuous improvements is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop." I am delighted with the outcome of our latest inspection, which reflects our staff's loyalty, commitment, and tireless work to protect Suffolk's communities, as well as the incredible achievements made by all teams since our previous full inspection in 2019. There have been many improvements in this time, especially in our protection work with businesses and landlords which has seen us recruit additional staff and target the areas of highest risk, enabling Suffolk to remain a safe and healthy place to live. Progress has also been made behind the scenes to ensure that we have the right people in the right jobs. We want SFRS to continue to be a diverse employer of choice, where staff can receive support with their health and wellbeing and have the career development opportunities they deserve. Whilst the inspection was mostly positive, it also identified areas where SFRS can improve, specifically in terms of its efficiency and how it can make the best use of staff across its prevention, protection, and response activity. The service was commended for "increasing staff numbers in important areas of work to improve performance", but inspectors felt that improvements needed to be made in productivity and ways of working, including making better use

of flexible contracts for firefighters. Our inspection report includes much to be proud of, and I am pleased that SFRS received commendation on its effectiveness and how well it manages staff. However, we do acknowledge that we could be more efficient at keeping people safe and secure, with work already undertaken to address this, including further investment in our Prevention team, which has resulted in a 60% increase in our home safety visits compared to 2020/21. We remain committed to making continuous improvements not just in our efficiency but in all areas of our work to enable us to maintain the highest standards of excellence and provide the best possible service to our county, regardless of whichever challenge may arise.

### **Cabinet backs consultation on devolution deal worth over half a billion pounds for Suffolk**

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, Councillors agreed to progress to consultation on Suffolk's proposed devolution deal which would hand the county more powers and control of over half a billion pounds in investment. The decision was made at a meeting of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said: "This proposed deal represents a big opportunity for Suffolk. By improving local transport infrastructure, building more affordable homes, and developing skills and training provision in a way that meets the needs of the local economy and local people, we could create new opportunities and raise living standards for our communities. "This is the start of a journey for Suffolk, and if agreed, this deal would mark a step change in our relationship with Government, placing us front and centre as a key partner and allowing us to ensure that Suffolk's voice is heard in the national conversation. In time, it would open the door to further negotiations and even greater self-determination.

"I look forward to hearing residents' and businesses' views on this proposed landmark deal."

A public consultation will be undertaken in early summer 2023 which will give residents and businesses the opportunity to have their say on Suffolk's proposed devolution deal. To enact the deal, a resolution to change the County Council's governance to a Directly Elected Leader and Cabinet model will need to be taken to Council for consideration. If approved, the Directly Elected Leader's election will be held within six months of that decision.

### **Plans to boost funding for Citizens Advice to support people with Cost-of-Living challenges**

SCC plans to increase its funding to Local Citizens Advice in Suffolk by £45,000, to support Suffolk Residents during the current Cost of Living challenges. The Council has set out in its 2023/24 budget proposals, that it plans to increase the amount of funding it provides to the Citizens Advice Bureau from £120,000 in the 2022/23 financial year, to £165,000 for the 2023/24 financial year. SCC's budget proposals will be voted on in February. The additional funding reflects the increased demand the service is seeing in light of the current cost of living pressures. We recognise the additional pressures the Citizens Advice and other voluntary organisations are under as more people are seeking support with the rising cost of living. People look to Citizens Advice in times of need, to provide friendly, non-judgemental and impartial advice, to help them find a way forward. This is why we have set out additional support for the Citizens Advice at this crucial time. We will continue work with the Citizens Advice and others to support our residents in the current financial climate. Local Citizen Advice officers across Suffolk are supporting Suffolk residents who need support in applying to the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme. The scheme was relaunched in October 2022 with an online application form. Suffolk residents can visit [www.suffolk.gov.uk/LWAS](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LWAS) to find out whether they may be eligible for financial support through Suffolk's Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on a wide range of topics. Find your local office at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

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