

August 2021 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk SEND provision review carried out by Lincolnshire now complete

The review of Suffolk's SEND provision is now complete. The review sought to focus on the processes, communications and customer facing elements of Suffolk's SEND service. Lincolnshire County Council were chosen to carry out the review due to their exemplary SEND track record. A multi-agency team from Lincolnshire County Council includes two senior officers, performance analysts and the chair of the County's Parent Carer Network. We now await the final report and recommendations from the Lincolnshire review team. To assist Lincolnshire with their review, Suffolk County Council provided the team with more than 100 SEND related documents, these included:

- Performance data
- Process documents
- Examples of co-production

Feedback from children and young people with SEND Additionally, over 25 meetings have taken place with more than 140 attendees, the included:

- Two groups of children and young people with SEND
- Four group of parents/carers
- 28 education settings
- A range of practitioners across Education, Health and Social Care

The recommendations made by the independent review will help us to fulfil our steadfast commitment to improve SEND provision in Suffolk. We recognise the issues facing SEND services at the moment, but significant progress has been made and will continue to be made. Improvement to SEND is one of the council's key priorities and we are determined to ensure this continues at pace and with the best outcomes for our children and families

Easing of restrictions when visiting Suffolk's Recycling Centres Suffolk

Much like many other recycling centres across the country, Suffolk's Recycling Centres have been operating a socially distanced system during the pandemic. From 19 July, there will be some changes to the rules when visiting the county's recycling centres, but you will still need to book, pending a full review of arrangements. The changes will take place in two phases to enable a managed increase in the number of bookings and to ensure that sites are operating safely and effectively.

Phase one from Monday 19 July:

- The one visit per week rule will remain in place, but an extra 3,760 slots will become available per week
- Cars with small trailers will now be able to book a 15 min car slot (750kg max gross weight, single axle and unbraked) and will also be allowed at Haverhill Recycling Centre
- Cars with large trailers will now book a 30 min large trailer/van slot (over 750kg max gross weight, double axle or braked), apart from at Haverhill Recycling Centre due to its size
- Vans without trailers will be able to book at all Recycling Centres (including Haverhill). Vans must book a 30 min van slot
- Vans with trailers are still prohibited from using any of the recycling centres

Social distancing will be removed from all sites. Cars can park next to each other (as directed by site staff) and restrictions on number of people on walkway/gantry removed. Staff will be able to assist visitors if requested. (All staff will wear FFP3 standard face coverings when assisting and follow good practice on Covid hygiene). More than one adult will now be allowed to unload per vehicle. Guidance will remain for the public to continue wearing face coverings if possible. Face coverings for staff remain optional except when assisting the public

Phase two from Monday 16 August (In addition to changes in phase 1):

- An additional 4,500 slots will be made available per week, taking Suffolk's Recycling Centres to full capacity (weekly total to 27,422)
- Removal of one visit per week rule for household waste
- Trade waste will remain restricted to one visit per week (to ensure fair usage of the system which is mainly designed for residents' household waste)

A customer survey from March 2021 revealed 91% of booking system users were satisfied or very satisfied (with a further 4% being neutral) and 92% of customers had a problem-free experience when using the booking system. I am really pleased that from 19 July we are able to start increasing capacity at our recycling centres by reducing some of the restrictions we had in place so we can soon be back to full capacity. We are doing this in two phases to ensure that our sites are operating safely and smoothly. In response to overwhelming customer satisfaction, the booking system will remain in place for the moment at all of Suffolk's Recycling Centres. We have received many compliments about the staff on our sites and I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication for what has been a difficult year.

Suffolk County Council begins procurement process for next Highways Service contract

On July 13 Suffolk County Council began the process of finding its next long term Highways Services partner. The council is looking for a partner to deliver key operational projects after the current contract ends on 30 September 2023. As part of preparations up to this point, the council has worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk based on the range of outcomes the council wants to achieve from any new contract process. The council is looking to develop a contract that utilises a blended 'hybrid' approach, enabling the council to enter into one contract that covers the majority of Highways Service functions and two contracts with specialist providers for streetlighting and traffic signals (ITS). The council will be looking for the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment. The whole contract development process will take just over two years to complete. Once the appropriate tender documents have been prepared outlining the council's requirements, initial advertisements will go out in December 2021. Discussions will begin with any interested prospective contractors in early 2022. Following such a rigorous tendering process, the council hopes to be able to award its chosen contract in early 2023 with the new service provider beginning in October 2023. The procurement process needs to begin now to provide enough time to go to the market to seek relevant specialist companies which may be interested in tendering for the contract which is worth in the region of £800m - £1 billion over a projected 20 year period. This is the beginning of the process today towards finding the right partners to deliver aspects of Suffolk's Highways Services beyond the end of the current contract in 2023. We want to get the best value for money for Suffolk taxpayers and ensure that the contractors we choose through the hybrid contract approach are the best fit for what we want to achieve and deliver.

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