

July 2021 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Independent review of aspects of Suffolk's SEND services to be carried out by experts from Lincolnshire

It has been announced that a multi-agency team from Lincolnshire will carry out an independent review into SEND provision. This review will be carried out by a senior professional with no links to, or direct involvement with, Suffolk's provision and will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within SCC. The SEND (special educational needs and disability) review will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within SCC. It will not look at specific cases or the provision given to specific children. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. The review team from Lincolnshire will consist of two senior officers from Lincolnshire County Council, performance analysts and the chair of the county's parent carer network. Lincolnshire has excellent SEND provision and the team has kindly agreed to review certain elements of our service and will make recommendations based on their findings which will be of great value to us. Families with experience of Suffolk's SEND may share their feedback of the communication process for the review, but we ask that this is relevant to the scope of the review. We have set up an email account for families to feed in their comments. It is important that a range of stakeholders are heard so we can fully understand our strengths and weaknesses and identify next steps. Ofsted have confirmed that we have made significant improvement in this area, and the findings of this review will enable this improvement to continue. SEND services in Suffolk are delivered in partnership by SCC, Suffolk's NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and education settings. The review will look at:

The effective flow of cases

Communication with young people and families

Processes for dealing with incoming enquiries from young people and families in a timely manner

A focus on the family-facing elements of the service

The allocation of provision and, where appropriate, placement in a timely way for children. It is the role of Ofsted to inspect all aspects of SEND provision. Ofsted and CQC has already made two monitoring visits to Suffolk and have identified areas of progress as well as areas of improvement. A new national SEND inspection framework is being launched, meaning further detailed inspections will take place. If you would like to participate in this review then please share your experiences of the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council at SendReview@suffolk.gov.uk.

Suffolk County Council launches the new Cassius service

On June 1st, Suffolk County Council launched the new Cassius service.

We are partnering with Alcove, Rethink Partners and Provide CIC to deliver their innovative care technology service to people in Suffolk over the next 3 years. From July, the Cassius service will give our social work practitioners, occupational therapists and other front line professionals, new ways to support people to live better and independent lives.

Initially the service will launch with a high impact, targeted range of technology that will continue to grow into the full Cassius collection. This means that the technology can be customised to meet people's needs and to address individual challenges which will help them live independently at home for longer. We are really excited to launch this new service with our partners. It will offer a simple, accessible, seamless and flexible approach which will help people to embrace the benefits of care technology and provide better outcomes. Our teams have worked hard over the last couple of years to create a vision of how we would like our digital care model to be – setting us aside from other local authorities. As we move away from the traditional analogue approach, we are embracing this opportunity to provide a pioneering and intelligent service that will evolve and adapt alongside societal needs. Cassius will focus on technology that promotes independence and provides monitoring and assessment in the first instance, but that is data driven to provide impactful insights into people's needs – this will help inform more targeted care and support where it is needed, and give people, loved ones and care providers peace of mind, real-time information and back-up support if it is needed. In the coming months, this will develop into a wider, more integrated package of technology that will support additional needs and opportunities.

Refurbishment of Bailey Bridge set to begin

On June 17th it was announced that the bailey bridge crossing the River Blyth and connecting Southwold with Walberswick is set to close on Friday 2 July 2021 to enable vital refurbishment works. Since SCC and its local elected members committed funds to undertake this major refurbishment, concerted efforts have been made to engage with key stakeholders and identify ways of mitigating the impact this closure will have locally. It has been fully recognised that the closure of this bridge at a time where lockdown is easing will present a challenge to local residents, businesses and visitors to the town. However the safety of those using the bridge has to be the priority. In light of the impact that this closure could have on local businesses and those using the bridge for commuting purposes, a number of mitigation measures have been explored to take place during the closure. These include: A support package of £5k per month, for the programmed duration of the works, for local residents directly impacted by the closure of the bridge – to be administered by the local councils. Longer working hours and a longer working week so the work can be completed as quickly as possible – shortening the programme of work from 16 weeks to 12 weeks. Temporary traffic measures in Walberswick for the duration of the work to better support those travelling into the area.

The Bailey Bridge connecting Walberswick with Southwold is an incredibly important structure in the east of our county. Refurbishment of this bridge is vital for the thousands who use it, whether they're visitors when exploring our coastal walks; or locals who shop and work between the two communities. We are pleased that the bailey bridge has continued to serve our communities over the past couple of years since the temporary repairs were carried out, however now it is time for a full refurbishment. Refurbishment of this bridge is one of Suffolk Highways' top priorities, and we will continue to work closely with officers to ensure this can happen in a way that minimises impact where possible and bring lasting benefits.

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