

## November 2021 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

### Extra COVID-19 support heading to Suffolk

Public health bosses in Suffolk have welcomed the Government's commitment to provide extra resources to help fight COVID-19 in the county. It comes as pressure on the county's hospitals is reaching critical levels due to more people needing treatment - and some of the highest rates of infection in the country. A request for additional support was submitted by Public Health Suffolk - on behalf of public sector partners - and is intended to secure in additional support, funding and resources to help the NHS avoid unsustainable pressure. The additional support will include:

- Support for the vaccination efforts by extending opening hours and creating pop up vaccination clinic within our communities
- Help to coordinate on the ground door knocking campaigns
- Help to reduce transmission in schools with increased testing and additional temporary powers
- Funding for COVID-19 awareness raising communications and advertising.

I very much welcome this additional help and funding from the Government. It will support our already considerable efforts to get more people vaccinated and to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Suffolk. Throughout the pandemic, Suffolk has been effective at keeping our COVID rates low compared to other parts of the country. This is because we have worked hard and been proactive at every stage. The situation facing Suffolk now calls for the same forward-thinking and preventative work to protect residents, businesses and our way of life. As we learn to live with COVID-19, it will be actions such as this that prevent COVID from having an even worse impact and, ultimately, holding back our recovery. To help reduce the spread, residents in Suffolk are now being encouraged to:

Get fully vaccinated and your booster when it's due  
Wash your hands regularly with soap and water  
Always wear a face covering in crowded areas  
Ventilate indoor spaces  
Get tested regularly and stay at home if you feel unwell

### Cabinet to study £50 million plan to boost Suffolk bus services

On October 7<sup>th</sup> it was announced that wider coverage, cheaper fares, improved ticketing, and better evening and weekend services are among proposals forming part of a £50 million plan. Following on from approval by the Suffolk County Council Cabinet, the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was submitted to the Government. Following on from the submission of the BSIP, the council, bus operators and other stakeholders will be working 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. Suffolk County Council will be asking for a minimum of £50m over three years - £15m each for the first two years and £20m for the third. The Bus Back Better National Bus Strategy provides a real opportunity to be ambitious in delivering a bus service for Suffolk that will support sustainable transport and the Council's carbon reduction ambitions.

Other proposed features include:

Reviewing service frequency on Suffolk's key corridors, including evenings and weekend services  
Simplified services - including regular timetabled buses and 'demand-responsive' services  
Expanding the experimental Katch electric demand-responsive bus, which is currently being piloted between Framlingham and Campsea Ashe for Wickham Market station to other rural areas  
Identify and implement bus priority opportunities and changes to parking on key corridors, with particular focus on the 'last mile' where buses are delayed by congestion approaching key destinations  
Lower fares for those aged up to 25  
Contactless touch-on and touch-off ticketing and daily fare caps  
Multi-operator ticketing o Expanding rail and bus ticket options (PlusBus)  
Develop existing park and ride sites as mobility hubs and identify new ones to serve rural areas or new development sites o Explore merging Ipswich's two bus stations into one main hub  
For more information please visit:

## **MPs from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and County Councillors, unite to protect the countryside and communities from the worst impacts of new pylons and cables**

It was announced on October 12<sup>th</sup> that the Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) has been set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR). A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised. The Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region. The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors. As well as scrutinising and responding to new policies and initiatives, the group will be a contact point for Ministers and senior officials, as well as for the National Grid, Crown Estate, and Ofgem, to engage with Regional Leaders. The group will also be inviting key stakeholders and community groups to meet with them, to better understand the impacts, and opportunities, of Net Zero transmission and generation infrastructure in the region. OffSET exists to promote strategic leadership of the development of a coordinated offshore electricity grid, to address the need for increased grid capacity which off-shore wind, coastal new nuclear, and international interconnectors will demand, while standing up for the countryside of East Anglia so that the welcome transition to net zero electricity generation does not do unnecessary damage to our communities or the environment. The County Council has long stated its support for renewable energy generation and the Government has quite rightly set ambitious targets in this area. However, to deliver on these it is essential that public support is maintained for the necessary transformation of the energy system. This means a much more coordinated approach is needed, with more transmission being delivered offshore. We must also see full engagement with our communities so that they and our unique natural environment are protected.

## **Lorry Route Plan review in Suffolk**

The technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011. This includes:

- new strategic roads
- new Lorry Watch areas
- Air Quality Management Areas in Suffolk

The review will involve two parts and will update and validate the County Council's existing lorry route network plan. The technical review is currently taking place. It'll look at a range of evidence including:

- Collision records and traffic data
- Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for weight, width and height restrictions
- The resilient road network and its strategic road network diversions as well as GPS data – showing the origin and destination of trips, routes taken and the locations of building strikes
- Public complaints

- Data from Lorry Watch schemes

The community led review will run from **22 October 2021** to **17 December 2021**. Suffolk County Council is seeking the views of Parish and Town Councils about their local issues and intelligence. Information will be gathered by a survey sent to all of Suffolk's Parish and Town Councils and their County Councillor will then be asked to endorse the key issues for their area. Each local council will be limited to three issues within their community to ensure fair and equal representation across the county. The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For more information click here: [Lorry Route Plan review in Suffolk | Suffolk County Council](#)

**Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division**

**Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : [matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk)**