

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2022



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• **£2.5M SAVED ON ENERGY COSTS AS LED STREETLIGHT PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION**

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion. It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far.

The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents.

It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date. In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights.

This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

• **COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW STREETS GUIDE FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE, PEOPLE-FIRST DEVELOPMENTS**

It was announced on November 3rd that ground-breaking new guidelines for developers to help them design sustainable and low-carbon neighbourhoods have been launched by Suffolk County Council.

The Suffolk Design: Streets Guide is the first document of its kind to prioritise walking and cycling in the routes people will use - and the infrastructure required to make them safe and attractive - over the needs of private vehicles. The guide can also be used by highway engineers, drainage engineers and Public Rights of Way officers in responding to planning applications and in the technical review and approval of new highways infrastructure. While not compulsory, the guide has been prepared with Suffolk's other authorities using government policies, guidance and best practice.

It replaces the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas, last updated in 2000, and has been drawn up with Stantec – a global leader in sustainable design and engineering.

In 2019, every local authority in Suffolk declared or acknowledged a climate emergency.

The design of streets has a significant role to play in the reduction of carbon emissions by prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and access to public transport, as well as managing the effects of flooding through effective sustainable drainage systems.

By placing greater priority on designing for people as pedestrians - whether wheeled or walkers - and cyclists, the council is contributing to its ambitions for reducing carbon.

- **COLIN LAW WAY AT GULL WING BRIDGE IN LOWESTOFT IS FORMALLY OPENED**

A road named in honour of a councillor who helped bring the Gull Wing bridge to Lowestoft has been formally opened. Colin Law Way is named after Councillor Colin Law, who was leader of the former Waveney District Council for six years until his death in May 2017. He also served as a Suffolk County councillor. Sadly, he died aged 74 after a short illness and before he could see work commence on the bridge. The bridge is being built by construction company Farrans on behalf of Suffolk County Council.

Colin Law Way forms part of the southern approach from Waveney Drive to the bridge and became operational in the summer. It was formally opened in a ceremony on Friday November 4 by Councillor Law's widow, Deanna, and other members of his family.

- **PORT WORKERS GET ON THEIR E-BIKES WITH COUNTY COUNCIL SCHEME**

November 15th saw Workers at ABP's Port of Ipswich plugging in to an e-bike trial scheme with Suffolk County Council. The council's Way To Go Suffolk team, which helps people to travel sustainably, has launched a scheme for businesses where employees are encouraged to ditch the car and try out an electric bike free of charge. Employees can choose to trial commuting for a week at a time with some of the bikes, whilst others are used as pool bikes allowing staff to pop out at lunchtime for a break and some exercise.

The Port of Ipswich is the first organisation to get involved with the scheme, having taken delivery of eight e-bikes for a trial period of three months. The bikes are supplied by e-bike rental provider Hurrecane.

They have a range of around 50 miles and, other than punctures, are covered with a call-out service for any breakdowns and repairs.

They are different to conventional bikes as they are powered by a battery to assist the rider, increasing the distance that someone can cycle. The council is initially looking to work with organisations that have at least 50 employees and are based in a large town environment.

- **NEW SCHEME 'MULTIPLY SUFFOLK' TO OFFER ADULTS A CHANCE TO IMPROVE NUMERACY SKILLS**

On November 15th, new initiative named Multiply Suffolk, which will offer adults an opportunity to improve their numeracy skills, was launched in Suffolk. The scheme is for those who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in Maths or equivalent. Adults can sign up for free courses and activities including Money Management and Numeracy for Parents/Carers. Unaccredited, informal learning as well as Level 1 and Level 2 accredited learning is available to residents on either a part-time or intensive basis and are offered in flexible settings to fit around people's lives. Multiply Suffolk has been created thanks to a £3.7m government investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aimed at boosting opportunities for more people to progress and secure well-paid jobs. SCC's Multiply Suffolk Team will work with subcontractors Realise Futures and Menta to deliver the scheme.

Multiply Suffolk was officially launched during the adult learning engagement event at Trinity Park, Ipswich on 9 November 2022.

For more information and/or to sign up for the scheme visit: <https://learnsuffolk.org/multiply-coming-soon/>

- **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL & IPSWICH SOFTWARE BUSINESS IJYI WIN NATIONAL AWARD**

On November 16th, Suffolk County Council (SCC) and IJYI, an Ipswich-based software business, won one of the UK's most important national IT awards. This is for the development of a critical data gathering and reporting tool used during the COVID-19 pandemic. In winning the award for Data Science Project of the Year at the 2022 UK IT Industry Awards, IJYI and SCC triumphed in a tough category that also included the likes of Thames Water and Openreach.

The CoronaWatch Dashboard was designed and developed by Suffolk County Council and IJYI to provide not only public access to critical COVID-19 information, but also in greater depth privately for key stakeholders, partners and decision-makers.

The award judges looked for the most outstanding IT project to deliver real value from data in terms of organisational performance, describing the Coronawatch project as an “agent for change”.

In addition to winning Data Science Project of the Year, IJYI and SCC were also finalists for the Public Sector Project of the Year award for their work on the Analysis of Additional Needs Tool (AANT) project.

The AANT process is designed to support the inclusion of children and young people across the county through cloud technology enabling access to consultation with an Educational Psychologist (EP).

This project highlights the level of innovation being undertaken within local councils and SCC specifically.

The AANT is being recognised as best practice with other Local Authorities who are now training their EPs to use this system too.

The UK IT Industry Awards are the largest and most well-known event in the technology industry calendar. Owned and operated by BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT and Computing, the awards enjoy a level of professionalism and industry knowledge not seen at other shows. As a result, winners are celebrated for genuine success.

• **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL LAUNCH ALL AGE CARERS' STRATEGY**

Suffolk County Council has launched its All-Age Carers' Strategy at today's Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy which has been developed with young carers and adult carers across Suffolk aims to support carers across Suffolk in their roles and will lead to the development of an action plan in the coming months. This will help SCC to provide carers with the right kind of quality support at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way. Many carers do not identify themselves as carers for approaching 2 years - they are reluctant to do so - therefore a key goal within this strategy is to reduce this timeframe and help them access the support they need. The five key priorities are;

1. Early identification of carers
2. Improved information and advice
3. Young carers to have the same priority as adult carers
4. Systems and services that work for and support all carers
5. Improved health and well-being for carer

An action plan will be developed in the coming months which will provide more detail how the priorities will be delivered and raise the profile of carers in Suffolk.

In 2020, research from Carers UK indicated that there were 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, which is estimated to have saved the country in the region of £193 Billion during the COVID-19 pandemic alone. In the 2011 census, 17,194 carers in Suffolk said they provided 50+ hours of care per week.

Currently, about 1 in 5 people living in Suffolk are aged 65 or over. It is estimated that over the next 20 years, this is forecast to change, with 1 in 3 Suffolk residents being aged 65 or over, compared to 1 in 4 for England. Projections also suggest that the number of people aged 65 and over who provide unpaid care in Suffolk will increase between 2019 and 2035, from 25,300 to 33,700 (an increase of 33%).

Read the Suffolk All Age Carer's Strategy 2022-2027.

• **WINTER GRITTING**

Column by Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding.

Despite experiencing what feels like the mildest winters we have had in very long time, our highways teams have been carefully planning our winter gritting operation for months to ensure we are prepared for whatever the weather throws our way.

On Sunday evening, 36 gritters including the public-named Father Gritmas, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang and Spread Sheeran went on their first run of the season, a county-wide treatment of priority 1 roads which took place as the road surface temperatures were forecast to drop below 0°C.

The gritting treatment of our roads in Suffolk is vital to ensure people can continue to travel and do so safely during the wintry weather. During the 2021/2022 winter season, Suffolk used around 9,388 tonnes of salt to treat a total distance of 129,367 miles – which equates to travelling the circumference of Earth over five times! Suffolk Highways currently has a stock of around 24,000 tonnes of salt across the county for the season ahead and is well prepared for any further drop in temperatures.

Our highway teams are responsible for gritting 36 Priority 1 (P1) routes, which amounts to around 1,259 miles, including all A and B roads, roads to fire stations, hospitals, main bus routes and rail stations. They also have 34 Priority 2 (P2) routes, which amounts to around 843 miles of the network, this includes other bus routes, roads leading to rural villages and access to schools. The P1 routes are completed when road surface temperatures are forecast to drop below 1°C and P2 routes are carried out when the forecast predicts there to be a longer period of hazardous conditions.

This entire operation is one which requires extremely careful pre-planning and running throughout, every single decision to grit or not is based upon forecasted road surface temperatures, whilst also considering the impact of other factors, such as wind and heavy rain.

But gritting the priority network isn't all that the teams do to prepare our county for wintry weather; Suffolk Highways has also refilled the 2,100 grit bins across the county at registered locations, such as the bottom of hills, or on junctions of minor roads. Grit bins are owned by parish and town councils and to ensure that the contents of grit bins are used to make roads safer, our communities are encouraged to monitor how and where the grit is used and if more is required to contact Suffolk Highways.

Suffolk's residents can also do their part to support us with our gritting efforts by parking considerately and leaving enough room so that our vehicles can grit the road – if we can't fit, we can't grit!

Anyone who would like to know when and where we are gritting over the coming months, all gritting activities will be posted to Suffolk Highways' Twitter and Facebook accounts – so I encourage you to give us a follow and keep abreast of all our teams movements this winter season.

To find out more about which roads are gritted, how we deal with the network in the event of snow, or grit bins, please visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/gritting. Suffolk Highways' winter gritting efforts forms part of the county council's wider 'Winter Matters' campaign, to provide Suffolk's residents with tips and advice on how to help look after their money, health, wellbeing and safety during the colder months. More information can be found by visiting www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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