

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – MAY 2018



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

- **MORE THAN 94% OF CHILDREN OFFERED FIRST CHOICE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Suffolk's primary school admission figures released on 16 April show that 94.6% or 7,435 children have been offered a reception place for September 2018 at their parents' preferred school, with 98.8% offered one of their three preferences. 0.6% more children received their first preference this year than last year.

Suffolk County Council received a total of 7,544 applications for a place in the Reception year from parents outlining which school they would prefer their children to be educated at from September 2018. 98.4% of pupils moving to a junior school have secured their first preference place with 99.68% being offered one of their three choices. The number of people choosing to submit an application online has increased from 93% to more than 94%.

- **OVER 6,500 POTHOLES REPAIRED IN SUFFOLK SINCE JANUARY**

Suffolk has seen over 6,500 potholes repaired since 1 January 2018; with a further 950 scheduled over coming weeks as the county council continues its war on potholes. Since the start of 2018, Suffolk Highways has received approximately 9,500 pothole reports from members of the public, some of which are duplicates. This is double the number received during the same period last year; demonstrating the impact that the severe winter has had on the county's road surface.

Suffolk Highways has made some significant steps forward to deal with the high volume of reports. Additional gangs have been brought in to undertake pothole and road repairs across the county, different materials are being used and existing resources are being diverted to help deal with the backlog of reports. Also, a new approach is being trialled where areas with particularly high volumes of reports are 'blitzed'. This means that inspectors are visiting areas with high concentrations of potholes, many of which are at varying degrees of severity, and ordering repairs for all defects as long as they meet Suffolk Highways' repairs criteria. They're then dealt with all at the same time.

Most of the work is then picked up in a co-ordinated approach, with gangs working their way through streets, rather than works being scheduled based on size and required response time. The exception to this is where the location of the defect means complex traffic management is required, such as busy roads or junctions. The first area addressed was Haverhill where there were over 70 reports of potholes, which resulted in approximately 50 works being ordered. Inspections have also been completed in Bury St Edmunds (60 reports), Withersfield (40), Hundon (30), Newmarket (30) and Pakenham (30). Gangs are currently focused on completing work in Bury St Edmunds and the other locations are currently being scheduled for coming days and weeks.

On 5 March, Suffolk Highways also begun trialling a new approach using a machine called a 'Roadmender'. The Roadmender is a highways vehicle with an asphalt mixer on the back. It works by keeping the material at a consistent and ideal temperature for compaction and only uses the quantities needed, limiting any waste material. This is an alternative treatment technique and the results are currently being analysed.

• FUNDING FOR FIRST TIME HEATING SYSTEMS

A reminder that up to 100% funding is available to install first time central heating systems in Suffolk residents' homes. This funding from National Grid's Warm Homes Fund has been secured by Suffolk County Council and the district and borough councils to help more than 500 fuel poor households in Suffolk over the next three years.

In Suffolk there are still a large number of houses that do not have a central heating system with a boiler and radiators. Cold homes are not just uncomfortable to live in, they can also have a negative effect on health.

Residents must own their property or be privately renting (i.e. not a council house or housing association property) and must not have an existing central heating system (a boiler and radiators). Eligibility criteria apply and may be linked to income. For more information see www.greensuffolk.org/whf

To find out more about the scheme, people can:

- Complete the online enquiry form at www.greensuffolk.org/seaenquiry
- Call the Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People service on 03456 037 686 (local rate) or
- Email sea@eastssuffolk.gov.uk quoting the 'Warm Homes Fund'.

• SUFFOLK LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE NEW FIRE ENGINE

On Tuesday 24 April, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service celebrated the launch of the new Light Rescue Pump (LRP) at Wrentham Fire Station.

The LRP is a new-look fire and rescue vehicle and was developed following feedback from local residents and staff through the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-2018 consultation.

As an important addition to the wider fire engine fleet, the LRP will make the best use of the firefighters from Wrentham, providing an effective and efficient service to the local community and the surrounding area.

The LRP is unique to Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and the Wrentham on-call firefighters were an integral part of the working group who designed it. It includes the latest firefighting and rescue equipment and has been specifically designed to provide flexible crewing in rural areas of between two and five firefighters, different to a standard fire appliance that usually has four to six firefighters.

The LRP weighs in at approximately five tonnes less than a standard appliance and cost £220,000 to build and equip, around £35,000 less than a standard appliance with similar firefighting and rescue equipment.

• CALL FOR ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS

In Suffolk, part-time on-call firefighters make up 66% of the total fire service workforce and crew 86% of our fire engines. Suffolk has more than 400 on-call firefighters working at the 35 fire stations across the county, and they play a vital role in ensuring people are safe from fires and other incidents. They do a fantastic job and are highly regarded in their local communities.

The fire service is always looking to recruit more on-call firefighters. After lobbying of Government by Suffolk and other fire and rescue services, the Home Office will soon be launching a national video and promotional literature to encourage the recruitment of more on-call firefighters, particularly focussing on female and BME

applicants. This national support recognises the increasing challenges fire and rescue services face with the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and that these challenges exist right across the country.

People interested in becoming an on-call firefighter must be 18 or older, and live or work within **five minutes** (or possibly up to ten minutes) of a fire station. They'll need enthusiasm, willingness to work in a team environment, and a desire to support their local community. They will also need to get consent from their main employer to be available when they are working. They will earn about £5,000 per year for attending calls, any training undertaken, and for maintenance work carried out on the fire engine and at the station.

More information on the role of on-call firefighters can be found at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/working-and-volunteering-for-fire-and-rescue/how-to-become-an-on-call-firefighter/>

- **WE ARE LISTENING EVENTS IN MAY**

Suffolk residents are invited to come along and chat with our Leader, other county councillors and senior managers about their **concerns** and **ideas** for the county of Suffolk.

- Wednesday 9 May - Halesworth, Thoroughfare
- Wednesday 30 May and Thursday 31 May (all day) Suffolk Show

- **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PUBLIC MEETINGS AND ON-TOUR EVENTS**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has now confirmed dates for his 2018 series of Public Meetings and on-tour events, to be held in each of the seven district/borough areas across the County.

The Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable or Assistant Chief Constable will join the PCC at each of the public meetings. The on-tour events will involve the PCC and the Chief Constable.

Dates, times and venues can be viewed on the PCC's website: <http://www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/>

For further information or questions please contact me at: stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

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