

October 2013 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk schools on the rise with Key Stage Two results

Suffolk schools have made a significant start to their ascent up the national league tables at Key Stage Two level. Following this year's results, Suffolk schools have climbed 16 places, up to 133rd, with almost one in four schools improving by more than 10% on last year. Results for schools within the first phase of SOR continued to improve strongly, with a 20% increase in the number of children reaching the expected level in writing and a 10% improvement in maths – in both cases, this is significantly above the county average. While this is an encouraging step in the right direction, clearly there is much more work to be done, to ensure the improvement is sustained over the coming years.

Applications now open for Suffolk's youth travel card

Any person living in Suffolk aged 16 to 19 can now apply for our free Endeavour Card, which provides a 25% discount on bus fares across the county. The card, which is similar to the Oyster Card used in London, came into operation from 1st October this year. To start with, the card will simply give users a discount, with them paying the balance as they get on the bus. But, from April next year, young people will be able to top-up the card with extra credit, to enable entirely cash-less payments, and so speed up boarding times. So far, a wide range of bus operators have signed up to the scheme. These include: Ipswich Buses, Galloway, Coach Services, Stephensons, Carters, Suffolk Norse, Anglian Bus and First Eastern Counties. Anyone interested in applying for an Endeavour Card can do so by going on-line to: www.suffolkonboard.com

SCC approves the delivery plan for Suffolk's Growth Strategy

The plan for helping Suffolk's economy to grow over the next few years has been supported by the county council. Following the development of a 'Growth Strategy' earlier in the year, a clear plan of action for its implementation, was debated at September's Full Council meeting and given its backing. Covering the three years to 2016, the plan focuses on four key areas: skills, inward investment and enterprise, infrastructure, and growth locations. The Plan has been developed by all the local authorities in Suffolk, who will be working together and pooling resources to help achieve the results aimed for in the Growth Strategy. Suffolk has a number of key industries and competitive advantages, and there will now be a sharp focus on developing the infrastructure and inward investment to ensure these are maintained and developed as far as possible.

Home care and community meals in the spotlight

A consultation on the future provision of home care and community meals has been given the go-ahead by the county council's cabinet. The council is committed to helping people to live healthy, active lives and to continue living in their homes, enjoying their independence, for as long as possible. However, it's recognised that the current home care service isn't working as well as it could. The views are therefore being sought of customers so as to help shape new proposals as effectively as possible. A formal, 12-week consultation is now underway, involving service providers, customers, health organisations, neighbouring local authorities and community groups. Proposals based on the results of this consultation will then be submitted to the cabinet next year. Supporting the most vulnerable people in our county is a vital priority for the county council. We must ensure that the home care services we provide are shaped by the people they are intended to support, and we look forward to receiving their contributions to this extensive consultation.

And finally:

Would you like a long, healthy life? Then come to Suffolk.

If you live in Suffolk, you are likelier to enjoy better health than people living across the border in Norfolk or Essex. A new survey, conducted by the Office of National Statistics, measured each area's healthy life expectancy – essentially lives spent in good or very good health. According to the results of the survey, women in Suffolk with a life expectancy of 84, can expect to spend around 68 of those years in good health – four more than the national average. Meanwhile, the equivalent for men would be 65.6 years of good health – again above the national average.

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