

Parish Report – February 2020

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Ipswich Northern Route project recommended to cease

The Leader of Suffolk County Council has announced that he will be recommending to his Cabinet that the Ipswich Northern Route should not proceed to the next phase of development.

This follows an Interim Study, a Strategic Outline Business Case and a public consultation into the proposed bypass to the north of Ipswich. The public consultation found that 70% of respondents were against the bypass, and there has been a prominent anti-bypass campaign organised by local residents. Following the publication of the Strategic Outline Business Case on 28 January, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and East Suffolk District Council all withdrew their support.

The Cabinet are due to make a final decision on the future of the INR project on Tuesday 25 February.

Children's Centres consultation launched

On 10 January, Suffolk County Council launched a consultation looking at the future of Children's Centres in the county.

Currently there are 38 Children's Centres in Suffolk, and the council is proposing to convert 16 of them into full-time Family Hubs and 11 into part-time Family Hubs. A Family Hub will provide a wider range of services for families with children aged 0-19.

A further nine centres will be repurposed for nursery or SEND provision, and the remaining two centres will be closed permanently.

The proposals also include greater investment in outreach, with any savings from the closures or reduction in hours of centres being reinvested back into the outreach service.

More details about the proposals and a link to the consultation are available at:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/ccconsultation

The consultation will close at 5pm on Sunday 1 March.

Phase 3 of Superfast Broadband Programme

The Cabinet has approved the roll-out of the third phase of Suffolk's superfast broadband programme with BT Openreach.

Currently, 96% of properties in Suffolk have access to superfast broadband. Phase 3 will aim to reach a further 2% of properties, who are amongst the hardest to reach. In order to fund this, the council will reinvest the £10m of 'gainshare funding' that it has received from the first two contracts with BT Openreach.

Introduction of permit scheme for roadworks

The Cabinet has also approved the introduction of a permit scheme, which will require utility companies to apply for a permit from Suffolk Highways before digging up roads in Suffolk.

Currently, utility companies only have to inform Suffolk County Council of their intention to conduct work on the highways. The introduction of a permit scheme will ensure that motorists have more notice of planned roadworks and will provide the council with more powers: the council can approve or refuse a request for a permit, and can also place conditions over the work carried out.

It is expected that a permit scheme will also result in less disruption for road users, as the council will be able to coordinate and plan works to ensure there are minimal road closures.

Any costs incurred by the council for running the scheme will be recovered through fee income from permit applications, so the scheme will be cost neutral.