

Parish Report – July 2020

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COVID-19 Update

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Suffolk Local Outbreak Control Plan published

Suffolk County Council has published a Local Outbreak Control Plan which sets out how Suffolk would prevent and respond to a localised outbreak of COVID-19. A copy of the full plan and an executive summary can be viewed here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolks-response/>

Suffolk has received £2.79m from the Government to support the delivery of the plan. The plan focuses on:

- Preventing and managing outbreaks in 'complex settings and groups' e.g. care homes, schools, health settings, workplaces, public spaces, BAME communities and those that are shielded;
- Strategic and coordinated approach to COVID-19 testing in Suffolk, with a focus on care home testing, hospital testing, lab capacity and workforce for swabbing;
- Suffolk COVID-19 Data Centre, which will continue to monitor the local situation;
- Providing clear guidance on NHS Test and Trace and what to do in the event of a local outbreak.

Concessionary travel rules reintroduced on public transport

Suffolk County Council has announced that concessionary travel rules, which had been relaxed during lockdown, will be reintroduced from July 6.

This means that from Monday 6 July, concessionary bus passes in Suffolk will only be valid Monday to Fridays from 9:30am to 9pm, and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The council has stated this is necessary to support social distancing on peak bus services, as more people return to work and school.

All passengers are now required to wear a face covering on public transport.

Planning Inspectorate accepts plans for Sizewell C and begins examination process

On 24 June, the Planning Inspectorate agreed that EDF Energy's DCO application for Sizewell C could proceed to the examination stage.

The formal pre-examination stage of the process (Section 56 Notification Stage) will begin on 8 July and run to 30 September. Anyone who wishes to be involved in the examination process will need to register on the Planning Inspectorate website to become an 'Interested Party' and provide a written summary of their views on the DCO application.

All registered Interested Parties will be kept informed of progress and about opportunities to participate in the next examination stage.

More information about the application and how to register as an Interested Party is available here: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/the-sizewell-c-project/?ipcsection=overview>

Both Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council have raised concerns about the adequacy of EDF's consultations so far, particularly with regards to the level and quality of information that has been made available throughout the consultation exercises.

On 9 July, my group will be proposing a motion to Suffolk County Council asking the Council to oppose the development of Sizewell C. If you are interested in watching the debate, the Council meeting will be available to watch on Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel.

Cabinet approves 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk

On 16 June the Cabinet approved a 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk, which identified 148 potential routes to be prioritised. This is as a result of a motion proposed by my group in July 2018, which called on the council to produce a strategic costed 5-year cycling plan.

Funding has not yet been secured for these routes, but the cycling plan will provide a strong basis to bid for funding as and when it becomes available.

The 148 routes identified by the plan are intended to be starting point, rather than a fixed programme of works. The Cabinet's approval of the plan means that discussions can begin with district and borough councils on developing the five-year-plan further. If the parish council has known routes in the area it would like to see improved or created, please let me know and I can feed this into the process.

Road closures to support cycling and walking

As part of the Covid-19 recovery and to support social distancing, the Department for Transport has told local authorities that they are expected to make significant changes to road layouts to support cycling and walking, with all measures implemented within the coming weeks. The Government has also asked that evaluation is included in the emergency interventions put in place so that authorities can make temporary measures permanent where possible, enabling a long-term shift to active travel.

Suffolk County Council plans include closing off sections of roads to motorised vehicles, widening existing footpaths and cycle lanes, providing temporary footpaths and cycle lanes and changing traffic signal timings to reduce waiting times at puffin and toucan crossings. The Council has been allocated £337k from the Department of Transport, with the potential for further funding if the measures they put in place are successful.

Details about the various schemes are available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/active-travel-improvements-for-cycling-and-walking/>

No spare seats will be offered on Home to School Transport buses

Suffolk County Council normally allows families who are ineligible for free school transport to purchase a spare seat on the council's school buses. However, due to social distancing requirements, school buses will only be able to transport a smaller group of children. The council have therefore stated that they are not in a position to be able to offer spare seats for September.

All affected families will be emailed directly to inform them of this change. If changes are made to social distancing rules, the council will review the guidance to see if they can safely offer spare seats.

Individual family circumstances will be considered under the usual review and appeal procedures, and the council will use its discretionary power to offer transport arrangements where it is clear that this is absolutely essential to enable a non-eligible child to attend school. The usual cost of a spare seat will apply where a discretionary seat can be provided exceptionally.

Any parents who are concerned by this change can call 0345 606 6173, and information will also be available on www.suffolkonboard.com.