September 2020 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Preparations are finalised for SCC funded school travel for the new school term

Suffolk County Council (SCC) have made preparations to ensure all pupils who are eligible for SCC funded school travel are transported to school safely for the start of term. SCC transports approximately 12,000 pupils, which is around 12% of the school population. On 11 August 2020, the Department for Education published official guidance on the measures that need to be in place to ensure that school transport is COVID-19 safe. SCC have been working closely with bus operators and schools to put these into place. There are three types of school transport that children travel on - either a dedicated closed contract, shared route, or public transport route. The guidelines for these routes are slightly different. The majority of eligible pupils travel to school on dedicated, closed routes. This means that the vehicle only carries school children. On these routes, social distancing will not apply. There will be other measures in place to ensure pupils' safety. For example, children need to make sure they wash their hands before and after travelling, and no eating and drinking will be allowed on these vehicles. Face coverings are also recommended for children aged 11 and over. Some children travel to school on shared routes. This is where most passengers are pupils going to school or college, but there are also a few members of the public travelling on the vehicle. SCC have worked closely with operators to ensure that there is enough space on these shared transport routes. Pupils should observe social distancing guidelines with members of the public and sit in the seats marked; they can sit next to members of their family or fellow pupils. On these routes, face coverings will be mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one, in line with guidance.
For pupils who travel to school by public transport, where routes are used mainly by the general public, social distancing will apply and face coverings will be mandatory unless the child is exempt from wearing one. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) most of their routes are dedicated, so this means there is little change to their transport. Where changes are being made, we are getting in touch with the families to explain the arrangements for the new term. A child must not travel on any of these routes if anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19, which are a new persistent cough, high temperature and/or a change in their sense of taste or smell. If the child or anyone in the household has these symptoms, then public health advice should be followed as usual. For further information visit www.suffolkonboard.com.

Suffolk celebrates 1,000 miles of newly surfaced roads

Suffolk Highways has completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network. In 2017, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four-year period; in a bid to improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and to help stop potholes from forming in the first place. The commitment also makes sound financial sense, as preventing the deterioration of road surfaces by machine surfacing or surface dressing helps reduce the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance repairing potholes now, and in future years.
The 1,000th mile was laid at Horham Road in Eye on Tuesday 4 August 2020. I am delighted to see our teams deliver on our promise to lay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's roads. Not only that, but we are also due to exceed the 1,000 miles and complete this work sooner than expected. Residents and businesses have always been clear that they want to see roads and infrastructure improved in Suffolk. This continues to be the biggest discussion point in our local communities. By delivering this programme we have been able to focus our budget and resources on improving our roads countywide and keeping them pothole-free for longer. I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked through a very challenging time to stick to this programme and deliver even better roads for Suffolk and its residents. We remain committed to focussing our efforts and resources where possible on this type of road improvement.

New project website for Suffolk County Council's A140 improvement scheme

Suffolk County Council has partnered with Interserve Construction to deliver a vital upgrade to the A140 road near Eye, Suffolk. This stretch of road has seen a number of issues over the last five years. The scheme will improve journey time reliability and road safety in the area, and advance access to the Eye Airfield Development Area. The improvements include:

Two new roundabout junctions on the A140 Castleton Way and south of Rectory Road.

A link road through to B1077 from the Northern roundabout.

Restricted movements at the A140/B1077 junction: prohibit right turns in and out, improving journey times and safety.

Closure of the A140/Rectory Road junction.

Landscaping and new pathways for walkers and cyclists.

Keeping the local community and key stakeholders updated and informed is a vital part of the project. Therefore, the project team is happy to announce that a dedicated website has been developed www.eyea140scheme.co.uk The website aims to update all interested stakeholders regularly about the project's recent activities and any traffic management measures which may be in place to help support the work. A phone number is also available (07917 598 686) to directly contact the project's representatives.

I would like to thank residents for their patience regarding these vital improvement works. The scheme's new website will ensure interested parties can be kept updated on the project's developments. There have been delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been unavoidable. We are trying to claw back some of the time we have lost and the best way to keep people updated with this work and the revised time scale is via the new website. Once the improvement works are completed, the new road layout will unlock Eye Airfield for economic development. There will also be significant highway benefits, because access to the A140 will be safer and more efficient, resolving long-standing safety and congestion issues. The scheme is expected to be finished early 2021.

New resources will help young people understand the link between movement and mental health

New resources have been published to help young people in Suffolk understand how movement and physical activity can improve their emotional wellbeing. The resources, which include a handy, pocket-sized information card, have been developed for young people with input and feedback from young people. Made possible by Suffolk Mind and the Suffolk Most Active County Partnership, with assistance from Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's engagement hub, the resources provide essential information about seven ways young people can improve their mental health through movement. They also include three simple and effective ideas that young people can try straight away to help them take control of their mind and mood through movement, as well as a range of key local contacts for further support. The publication of these resources is very timely given emerging evidence that young people's mental health and wellbeing has suffered during lockdown. The link between exercise and mental health cannot be over-stated, but sadly is something that often gets forgotten. So, to have a clear and concise reminder of the all the benefits we gain from being active is extremely helpful and something, I hope, will act as an incentive to encourage our young people to think about moving more.

Charlie Green, from Suffolk Mind, said: "Research shows that physical activity and movement, in all it's different forms, is at the centre of good mental and physical health for young people and, as lockdown eases, it's important to help them find the motivation to move in enjoyable ways so it becomes part of their daily lives". The resources will be distributed to schools, GP surgeries and libraries across the county. They are also available as a direct download from www.keepmovingsuffolk.com/wellbeing and www.thesource.me.uk/move.

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