

Parish Report – November 2021

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COVID-19

Suffolk has been declared an “Enhanced Response Area” (ERA) due to the high Covid rates. Information on this and other local stats are available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

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

Full Council – Motion and Decisions

The Suffolk County Council met for a Full Council meeting on the 21st October 2021. Our Group proposed a motion to support the Local Electricity Bill, a proposed change in the law which would allow small-scale electricity producers to sell their electricity at proportionate cost, potentially making local electricity cheaper and more reliable. The motion was passed unanimously. Details of the motion can be found here: <https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors>

The Conservatives proposed a motion to condemn the tactics used by the protest group Insulate Britain, which was passed with the following vote: 41 For, 9 Against, 7 Abstained.

Cabinet Meeting – 12th October

On the 12th October, the Cabinet and Councillors met to discuss the following two matters: Recommendations highlighted in the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21, and to vote on submitting the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), in relation to the Council’s Bus Back Better Strategy. Summary of the main decisions are below:

1. The Cabinet accepted the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21 and noted the report’s recommendations and the action that the Council was taking to address the recommendations.
2. The Cabinet acknowledged and agreed to the headline asks and order of costs contained in the proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), as set out in the report.
3. The Cabinet delegated final development, including costings, and the submission of the BSIP, to the Executive Director for Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste.
4. The Cabinet noted that a further Cabinet paper on the Enhanced Partnership Arrangements would be provided prior to its submission in March 2022.
5. Full Cabinet Reports can be viewed here: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

Suffolk Schools to Reintroduce Face Coverings

On Wednesday 20th October, the Directors of Public Health, and Children and Young People Services, released a statement notifying us that face coverings are to be reintroduced into schools from 1st November.

This is due to the rising COVID cases in Suffolk, and therefore staff and students will have to wear face coverings in communal areas, outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons. Visitation will also be restricted to essential visits. A further review on its effectiveness will commence 15th November. See Cllr Simon Harley, our Group's Public Health Spokesperson's comments on the decision at <https://suffolkgli.wordpress.com/2021/10/26/gli-public-health-spokespersons-warning-over-winter-response-to-reintroduction-of-covid-measures/>

Sizewell C: Government Announce Support & New Funding Strategy

On the 15th October, Suffolk County Council announced their support for Sizewell C, and are taking up 'important concerns' with the Secretary of State. Our Group remains firmly against the project, believing there has been a political underestimation, and that the people of Suffolk are being sold short by the Administration's inability to face the reality of the situation.

In addition, on 26th October, Business and Energy Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, announced a new government strategy for funding Sizewell C. The project so far has been heavily contentious, suffering from delays and planning concerns, as well as rising costs.

The Government has announced a Regulated Asset Base funding plan – a strategy that aims to retain investors by shifting the costs of the project onto the consumer - the British public. In the form of a taxpayer subsidy, the Government would pay the costs of the project to the developers that investors deem too risky to commit further.

Our Group rejects this strategy and recommends that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks at investing in cleaner, cheaper, and quicker forms of renewable energy.

Bus Back Better: Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Approved

The Cabinet approved the new Bus Service Improvement Plan, as part of their new £50m Bus Back Better strategy – aimed at rejuvenating Suffolk's bus service, in particular isolated areas of rural Suffolk. Our Group supports the essential commitment needed to help connect rural communities.

Bus Back Better aims at making bus services cheaper, more reliable, and carbon efficient. All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here:

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

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