

## December 2016 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

### **Suffolk County Council commits to pursuing principles of devolution further**

At its full council meeting, Suffolk County Council voted to support a number of recommendations towards looking at the potential for a future devolution deal for Suffolk. The vote was 57 in favour and there were 7 abstentions. The full recommendations discussed and agreed were as follows:

#### This Council agrees:

To reiterate the commitment given previously by the Council to devolution as a means of delivering accelerated growth in the local and national economy and of helping local people and places to fulfil their potential;

To authorise the Leader and Chief Executive to:

- a) seek an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss the Government's intentions in relation to devolution
- b) work with Government and local partners to agree an alternative devolution deal as soon as possible

That further reports are presented to the Council and Cabinet, as appropriate, as the devolution process progresses.

All seven other local authorities in Suffolk have voted on these recommendations and have all agreed these principles. A statement from Public Sector Leader's was issued shortly after the Secretary of State ended the Norfolk and Suffolk bid process. Cllr Jennie Jenkins, Chair of Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders Group said: "It was disappointing news to hear the results of the votes at King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council last night and it appears as though this means that there will not be an agreement reached for a Norfolk and Suffolk devolution deal at this time. However, it is important for those of us in Suffolk who wish to explore the potential opportunities for devolution further, to continue conversations with government and to meet as planned during the next seven days to vote on the commitment previously given to each respective authority in Suffolk. We will be seeking to explore the potential for a Suffolk-based devolution deal and to investigate options for establishing interim governance arrangements for any such alternative deal."

### **Chance to have your say in budget setting process**

People in Suffolk are being asked to share their views on what matters most to them to inform the budget setting process. As grant funding from central government continues to reduce, Suffolk County Council is required to make savings of more than £46million in 2017/18, followed by further savings in the years after. This means the council needs to look at where it should prioritise spending and how it can make savings across the services it provides. As part of the public engagement, people are being asked where they think Suffolk County Council should prioritise spending. The survey closes on 30 December 2016 and the budget report will be considered by the Suffolk County Council Cabinet on 24 January 2017, who will make recommendations to Full Council on 9 February 2017.

To have your say, visit [www.suffolk.gov.uk/budgetsurvey2017](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/budgetsurvey2017)

### **Upper Orwell Crossings consultation results released**

The results of the consultation as part of the process to build the Upper Orwell Crossings have been released. The consultation was launched on 1 July 2016 after Suffolk County Council received a provisional funding agreement of £77million from the Department for Transport for the Upper Orwell Crossings, which followed the approval of its Outline Business Case which demonstrated how the proposed crossings would support investment, enterprise and regeneration in Ipswich, and would relieve congestion and improve connectivity for all road users. The consultation aimed to raise awareness and inform businesses, residents and local communities about the project, its objectives, the planning process and their opportunity for input. It also aimed to provide the opportunity for people to have their say about the proposals. In total there were 743 survey responses between 1 July and 12 August, with 88% of people saying the most important aspect of the crossings were the reduction in congestion. 82% of people believed another important aspect of the project was the continued investment in Ipswich Waterfront. With regards to the impacts of the crossing, 82% of people said the visual appearance and design quality of the crossings were the most important. The designs of the bridge are currently part of a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) competition to select an architectural team, with a decision to be announced in early 2017. Going forward, the successful elements of this consultation will be built on for the formal consultation and the team behind the project will consider how the proposed walking and cycling provision relates to the wider vision for the broader network. Consideration will also be given to the locations of the crossing and the types of mitigation required to address traffic impacts.

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