January 2020 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service rated "Good" in Government inspection

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been rated "Good" for its effectiveness, efficiency and how well it leads and manages its staff. The findings come from a report published on 17 December by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), who inspected Suffolk's service earlier this year. Inspectors reviewed every aspect of the service, from how we respond to 999 emergencies, to looking at policies and interviewing a wide range firefighters and staff. The report praised many aspects of the service, particularly how well it collaborates with other emergency services and agencies, how it responds to fires and other emergencies, how it ensures fairness and promotes diversity, and the financially sound way the service is run. The 'Good' rating we have been given is pleasing and positive for our first inspection. This is down to the hard work and dedication of all our staff. I know from regularly speaking to firefighters and staff, that the service is in good hands, and Suffolk is a safe place to live and work. There is always room for improvement, and we will continue to work on these areas highlighted in the report.

New SEND provision identified – ready to offer 168 additional spaces from September 2020

Suffolk County Council is now in a position to provide further information regarding the development of new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) units attached to mainstream schools in the county. The authority is very pleased to announce that, following a thorough evaluation process, a number of suitable schools have been identified to develop:

Two Generic Key Stage 1 Units – Pipers Vale Primary Academy and Burton End Primary Academy

Three Communication and Interaction Key Stage 2 Units – Murrayfield Primary Academy, Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy, and Causton Junior School

One Cognition and Learning Key Stage 2 Unit – Clements Primary Academy

Three Communication and Interaction Key Stage 3/4 Units – Copleston High School, Ixworth School, and Newmarket Academy

One Cognition and Learning Key Stage 3/4 Unit – Castle Manor Primary Academy.

In total, this means an additional 168 new specialist placements will be available for children and their families in Suffolk from September 2020, on top of existing specialist provision. Successful schools are currently working with the council to ensure the appropriate infrastructure and support is in place to enable these new units to be open in September 2020. A further commissioning round will begin in Spring 2020 and will consider further expressions of interest from mainstream schools who hope to open units in September 2021. This will include targeted work from our provider development team in areas of the county where gaps have been identified to ensure we are able to offer local provision for our children and their families. We are delighted with the interest shown by our mainstream schools and would like to thank all those who came forward wanting to work in partnership to deliver this provision. The council is very pleased to work in partnership with the Suffolk Parent Carer Network and a spokesperson for the Network, said: "The development of new specialist education placements is something that SPCN continue to be involved in at all stages, with the parent carer voice & feedback we have received being an integral part of the specialist unit provision process. To see so many providers coming forward saying they want to be part of the solution gives us real hope that we are now on our way to having an education offer that meets the needs of Suffolk's most vulnerable learners and we look forward to working alongside all partners in the future developments of the Capital Programme."

David Waters jailed for 2 years and 8 months for misleading vulnerable customers

On 19 December, Suffolk businessman David Waters (of Manwick Road, Felixstowe) received a 32-month custodial sentence. He has also been banned from being a company director for 10 years and been made the subject of a criminal behaviour order, which prevents him from selling any products in a person's home and any involvement in a mobility aid company. His company, Anchor Mobility Ltd, was also fined a total of £15,000 for 15 counts of unfair commercial practice, following a successful prosecution by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards. Mr Waters failed to fulfil orders and refused to refund customers in his position as sole director of Anchor Mobility Limited, a company meant to provide life-improving furniture to vulnerable and elderly people. Instead, many customers received no goods, no refunds and poor customer service. One customer paid over £8,000 for two beds, which were never delivered, and no refund was ever received. A hearing to consider compensation for victims will take place in the new year.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk