



# District Councillors Report

18 July 2020

Cllr Colin Hedgley

Cllr Tony Fryatt

## Communities and supporting residents

There are 7,031 people on the shielded list in East Suffolk this week, with 1,068 currently receiving Government food parcels. 1,792 referrals have been received, in total now, through Home But Not Alone – with 1,267 referrals from the Lowestoft Community Partnership area. The next highest area in terms of referrals is Felixstowe (106) and the lowest is Framlingham (12). On average 60% of referrals are for food, 30% for Medicines and 10% for Isolation/Other needs. Meanwhile, more than 70 calls have been made to people identified by the CCG (north) through their Covid Protect system as having non-medical needs.

As previously mentioned, 'Grandpads' have been allocated to 24 residents who are digitally deprived and are now able to use these simple devices to engage with others. The CCG (south) have now identified funding for 50 more.

Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership agreed this week to allocate almost £10,000 of funding to continue the befriending scheme in Lowestoft and around £20,000 is remaining in the Hardship Fund with more than £100k allocated to groups and individuals.

## Grants, funding and business matters

### Response

Applications for both the original business and more recent discretionary grants schemes are now reducing significantly. To date ESC has awarded grants totalling £62.6m to 5450 businesses in East Suffolk. We continue to take a permissive approach to awarding the discretionary grants of between £2,500 and £25k and the feedback from the businesses receiving grants has been that they really are providing a lifeline and allowing them to continue trading and retain staff.



The Economic Development (ED) team also continue to support safe town centre reopening with the roll out of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund. Barriers and signage have now been provided to a number of towns and in collaboration with Environmental Health team we have now supported road closures/ highways changes in 5 towns to allow for the safe use of high streets.

### Recovery

The ED team continue to develop the Council's Economic Growth programme so it can reflect the new economic environment following the lockdown. This adapted plan will continue to focus on supporting enterprise, growth in established businesses and attracting investment focussed in our key sectors. There will also be a strong focus on inclusive growth and ensuring our workforce has the right skills to take advantage of the employment opportunities available.

Work continues on developing an economic growth programme related to the Sizewell C development. This provides a once in a generation opportunity to transform the local economy but particularly in areas such as employment, enterprise, supply chain growth and inward investment. Additional resource has been taken on to ensure we have a robust plan to maximise the economic benefits and this will play a key role in supporting the recovery of the East Suffolk economy.

Work also continues on the development of the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan which can secure up to £25m of govt funding for infrastructure investment. Detailed work has been completed to determine the projects which will be included in the plan and those for which we will be seeking direct funding. Additionally, we have received £750k from the Accelerator Towns Fund which will support the redevelopment of East Point Pavillion.

This along with the wider Towns Fund investment and the recent announcement of £43m for the flood prevention scheme will provide a huge economic boost to the area and contribute to the district's economic recovery.

### Environmental Health

#### Test & Trace

East Suffolk Council are leading the Suffolk Test & Trace workstream on complex workplaces and enforcement issues and chair weekly meetings with representatives from Environmental Health, Trading Standards and the Public Health Team. The group have links with the HSE and FSA who are the enforcing authorities in a number of these more complex work settings such as meat processing plants and manufacturing businesses.

Lessons are being shared nationally from outbreak investigations carried out in other parts



of the country, for example, the 2 Sisters meat processing plant in Anglesey. The Food & Safety Team have written to our meat and fish processing premises with information and advice on Test & Trace, Covid secure requirements and cleaning arrangements and follow up calls will be made to these businesses to check their understanding of the Test & Trace requirements and discuss any particular risks with their workforce. The retail and hospitality sector have already received information and guidance from the team following the easing of restrictions and other complex work settings will be the focus of future engagement work.

### **Operational updates**

#### Leisure Centres

Government announced that leisure centres can reopen from the 24th July, which is positive news. This is not a simple task: East Suffolk is in the middle of both a leisure procurement exercise, and a refurbishment programme. And leisure operators are all working through the guidance to understand how they can reopen facilities safely. We are in discussions with both Sentinel Leisure and Places Leisure about how – and when – they are going to be able to reopen sites. It is unlikely – given the work that is going to have to take place before they can open – that this will be before August. In addition to this, we are in discussion with operators about how we can fund the new opening arrangements: restrictions on customer numbers mean that the income that the operators receive is likely to be down by up to 60%. We therefore need to agree a funding package to allow these sites to reopen for the benefit of our residents