

June 2019 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Housing and the environment among priorities outlined by Suffolk County Council leader

In a speech to the council's Annual General Meeting, Councillor Matthew Hicks confirmed the authority's commitment to continuing work to protect vulnerable adults and children, improve Suffolk's roads, and raise educational standards. He also outlined five new policy priorities to address in the coming twelve months. Speaking at the meeting, Councillor Hicks said: "The chronic shortage of housing in Suffolk and throughout the country is well-known. What is less well-known is that Suffolk County Council is the third largest landowner in Suffolk. Much of that land is put to good use, as county farms, operational depots and office accommodation. There is scope to convert some of our land into much needed housing that would present an opportunity to generate income for the county council to reinvest in vital public services. My administration will develop proposals to make best use of our significant land asset, with a focus on delivering the kind of homes Suffolk needs." On the environment, Councillor Hicks said: "Earlier this year, we voted in this chamber to declare a climate emergency. This was a progressive step forward. For me, the need to sustain our environment is greater now than ever. "This is not a surprising decision, given our authority's positive track record on reducing energy consumption, carbon emissions and waste. "We have work to do. Shortly we will launch a new cross-party policy development panel and I look forward to the panel's recommendations. We can act now. My administration is refreshing Suffolk's Greenest County programme and I look forward to the relaunch with renewed vigour, profile and commitment later this year." Councillor Hicks also announced plans to work with partners, businesses and residents to develop a long-term vision for Suffolk, to renew the council's approach to growing Suffolk's economy and for the council to act more commercially. Ending his speech, Councillor Hicks said: "No matter how difficult the decision, how strenuous the challenge, my administration will not shy away from it nor will it fail to involve people. We will be bold. We must have the humility to recognise that we don't have all the answers but can find them by working productively with others. "We must be ambitious for Suffolk. We must strive to make our County proud of all we achieve. That work starts now." For the full speech: www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/housing-and-the-environment-among-priorities-outlined-by-suffolk-county-council-leader

Ofsted confirms that Suffolk County Council's Children's Services are 'Outstanding'

On 21 May, it was announced that Ofsted inspectors have awarded Children's Services at SCC the top grade of 'Outstanding' following their visit in April 2019. Only eight other Local Authorities, out of 152, have been judged to be 'Outstanding' overall. Ofsted's inspection report of children's social care services said: "Services for children are of an exceptionally high standard. They are child-focused and make a positive difference to children's lives". Inspectors were impressed with improvements made across the service since it was rated 'Good' in 2015. The report states that, "stable and aspirational leadership and strong political and financial support have created conditions that are conducive to continuous improvement and the development of sustainable, high-quality services. Senior leaders have addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection. Inspectors commended the staff, highlighting that "the work that staff are doing with children and young people is impressive; the way that they are doing it is making a real difference to their lives". Workforce management is also recognised as a strength. Inspectors praised the ethos within the council's children's services, saying "the local authority consistently demonstrates, through its range of help and protection services, its commitment to supporting parents to bring up their children safely and successfully".

New Highways Self Help scheme empowers Suffolk people to do more in their community

The much-anticipated scheme has been developed in partnership with towns and parishes across Suffolk after it was recognised that many of these councils were willing to carry out additional works to maintain and improve the look of their communities, such as sign cleaning, hedge cutting, and fingerpost painting. Highways has committed £100k to the scheme in its first year, taken from the £9.67million additional funding allocated to Suffolk Highways by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, in the Budget last October. The investment will help fund training; personal protective gear such as gloves, hi-viz and safety glasses; and any necessary tools. The types of works that town and parish councils are keen to undertake include: sign cleaning, fingerpost cleaning/ painting/ repair, tree pruning/branch removal, hedge cutting/pruning, siding out of footways, or paths (widen to original/full width), grass verge cutting, weed killing/weed removal. Community Self Help is a further stepping-stone in our bid to work closely with towns and villages throughout Suffolk to achieve even more for our highways across the county. Please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/communityselfhelp for more details.

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