

## **FRISTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **SCC NEWSLETTER MAY 2019**

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

A new programme using council land to create much-needed homes and a plan to cut carbon emissions are among the priorities outlined by the Leader of Suffolk County Council on 23 May.

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. These include proposals to start using council-owned land to create more homes in Suffolk, and plans to cut carbon emissions, starting with a major policy review involving a cross-party group of councillors.

#### **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. And 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."

Building on work in the past twelve months, Councillor Hicks pledged to continue working collaboratively with district and borough councils, other public sector partners,

businesses and residents to find the best ways of delivering services to the people that need them most.

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.

**He said:**

"We have significantly improved our relationships with district and borough councils, the wider public sector and business community. We have listened to and involved residents and service users on key decisions and made it possible for councillors, of all political persuasions, to influence policy."

Councillor Hicks confirmed the reappointment of his current cabinet members and deputy cabinet members, with the addition of Councillor Nick Gowrley who will lead the council's new economic development and housing portfolio.

**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."

[Read Councillor Matthew Hicks' speech in full](#) (PDF, 131KB)

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

On 21 May, Ofsted inspectors announced they have awarded Children's Services at Suffolk County Council the top grade of 'Outstanding' following their visit in April 2019. Out of 152 Local Authorities only eight others have been judged '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. They have continued to attract new opportunities, develop practice and strengthen partnerships".

Inspectors commended 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”. The report states that, “workers build positive and purposeful working relationships with children and their families. They ensure children are safeguarded, and that their wider needs are addressed. They consistently act to ensure the best outcomes for children”. 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”.

**Allan Cadzow, Corporate Director for Children and Young People at Suffolk County Council, said:**

“We are over the moon to receive such a high rating from Ofsted. This really shines a light on the great work that our staff deliver, day in day out, often in difficult circumstances, to support the most vulnerable children and families in Suffolk.

“A rating of Outstanding puts Suffolk right up with the highest performing authorities in the country for children’s services. I am very proud that our passion, professionalism and commitment has been recognised and our staff should be rightfully proud of what they have achieved.

“We work extremely hard to look after all our children in Suffolk and we are committed to delivering the highest quality service to ensure they benefit from the best support, care and education we can provide. We intend to get even better.”

**Gordon Jones, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills at Suffolk County Council said:**

“An Outstanding Ofsted judgement for our Children’s Services is an amazing and well-deserved achievement for Suffolk. “I would like to thank everyone who delivers outstanding services to support young people in Suffolk, it is most rewarding to receive such endorsement from Ofsted. Our staff are compassionate, professional and sensitive to the needs of the residents they support.

“I do accept that we need to do more for Suffolk’s children with additional needs, and we are taking swift and effective action to address both the current shortfall of SEND services in our county, but also to build capacity with our partners for the future.

“All children have the right to the appropriate level of support they need to aspire and achieve, and I am committed to ensuring that this is the reality for all of Suffolk’s young people, including our most vulnerable children.”

## New fire engines and uniforms making Suffolk safer



Suffolk's firefighters are now kitted out in new state-of-the-art uniforms, making them safer than ever before. The new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) saw its first action on 1 May 2019, as firefighters responded to reports of a washing machine fire near Bury St Edmunds. The new clothing is more lightweight, comfortable and tailored, and includes specific designs for men and women. There are also different uniforms for different incidents. Three new fire appliances are also being rolled out, to be based at Framlingham, Holbrook and Long Melford fire stations.

**Mark Hardingham, Suffolk's Chief Fire Officer, said:**

"A firefighter's role has changed a great deal in recent times. In the last year, over a third of emergency incidents we attended were not actually fire related. These included events such as road traffic collisions and rescues of both animals and people, from water or height.

"The new multi-purpose uniforms will allow our firefighters to adapt to the ever-changing demands on them."

This is the first major upgrade to firefighters' equipment since 2011. As well as providing firefighters with the latest PPE, the new contract also provides better value for the Service and Suffolk County Council.

**Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, explains:**

"This is an excellent example of what can be achieved when services across multiple local authorities work collaboratively. We worked in consortium with 12 other fire services across the country, to create an efficient and cost-effective way of purchasing the equipment, ensuring that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is at the forefront of PPE.

"This is part of our on-going programme of investment to make sure our firefighters have the best available tools for the job, whilst improving their safety and wellbeing. Despite the ongoing financial challenges, our priority is keeping our staff and Suffolk safe."

The old uniforms will be returned to their previous supplier, where they are recycled and often exported abroad, predominantly to African countries.

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

'Highways Community Self Help' is designed to support and empower town and parish councils in Suffolk to carry out minor maintenance tasks in their area. 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.

Towns and parishes across Suffolk will be able to carry out these tasks and more through one or more of the following four options:

- Buying in services from contractors
- Using their own trained employee(s)
- Using volunteers to undertake work
- Buying additional services from Suffolk Highways.

### **Councillor Mary Evans, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:**

"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. This new scheme allows us to work with town and parish councils across the county who have a great sense of community spirit and pride. The scheme will empower them to undertake minor maintenance tasks on their public spaces about which they care so deeply." Towns and parishes that are interested in joining Community Self Help are encouraged to visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/communityselfhelp](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/communityselfhelp) for more details.

**Andrew Reid - County Councillor Wilford Division**

**Tel: - 07545 423799; Email: - [Andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk)**