Cllr Matthew Hicks 2021 Annual Report for the Thredling Division

Council proposes unprecedented environmental plans in response to climate emergency
In response to its declaration of a climate emergency, Suffolk County Council aims to lead the way with an unparalleled range of activities and policy changes to support its ambition of being a 'net zero' authority by 2030. The council's Cabinet reviewed and agreed an extensive programme of recommendations to achieve this ambition. The plans include dozens of changes and new ways of working, from making its pool car fleet all-electric, to making it mandatory for all future committee decisions to consider the net zero ambition. Being 'net zero' means that the council will remove its carbon emissions where it can; if it is unable to do so, it will compensate for those emissions. The council will adopt a more detailed method to measure its carbon emissions output, so that it can more accurately track its progress on an annual basis. SCC has been involved with successful climate change projects for many years, including the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. We have put millions of pounds into energy efficiency projects for both businesses and homes and continue to do so. Suffolk has been moving in the right direction, having seen carbon emission reductions of 41% since 1990. But now is the time to move up through the gears and do even better. The impact of climate change is an issue which involves everyone and affects everyone. With the approval of these plans, the council will lead by example. We will inspire other businesses to see what can be achieved, to show that change can, and must, happen. In March 2019, Suffolk County Council was the first authority in the county to declare a climate emergency. One of the council's priorities after this declaration was to set up a policy development panel (PDP). The panel met regularly, discussing the changes and challenges the council faces in reducing its carbon emissions. Amongst the recommendations, Suffolk County Council will continue its work with all other local authorities and agencies, under the umbrella of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, which was formed in 2007. With all local authorities having now declared a climate emergency, they will use their combined powers, duties, influence and leadership, continuing their work together to achieve the net zero ambition for emissions from all of Suffolk.

Suffolk wins funding for the next stage of A12 improvements
It was announced that Suffolk has secured £830,000 of funding from the Department for Transport, to develop an Outline Business Case to take forward its plans to improve the A12. Announced during the Government's budget, Suffolk County Council has been successful in winning £830,000 of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) to take forward its plans to improve the A12 East of Ipswich. This project is specifically looking to increase capacity and improve overall traffic flow at junctions and will explore the potential for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the A12. With the funding secure, SCC's Transport Strategy Team will now begin work to develop the outline business case which, following public consultation, will be used to make a further bid to central government for funding to deliver the scheme. It was also announced in the budget that the DfT have given their approval for SCC to develop and submit a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for a project to dual the A12 between
the Seckford and Dobbies roundabouts near Woodbridge. Whilst this does not include any funding at this stage, the SOBC will enable SCC to bid for future funding for this project too. I am delighted that once again Suffolk County Council has been successful in bidding for funding from central government for large infrastructure projects. These improvements are between the A14 Seven Hills junction and the A12/A1214 Park and Ride Roundabout and will help boost road capacity and traffic flow. I am also pleased that the scheme includes additional proposals to help encourage more walking and cycling.

More than 98% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day
On 16 April, it was reported that over 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of the schools preferred by their parents. SCC received 7,602 applications from

parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020. Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools. We have a good track record of offering places at preferred schools and this year is no exception. I am delighted that we have been able to give most parents a place for their child at one of the schools they want. We use published criteria to decide who has priority for places so that the process is fair and clear. I appreciate that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school and where a parents' preference for a Suffolk school is refused, we will automatically add their child's name to the waiting list for that school. We will also advise them about how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so.

Suffolk celebrates 1,000 miles of newly surfaced roads

I am pleased to report that Suffolk Highways completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network. In 2017, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four-year period; in a bid to improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and to help stop potholes from forming in the first place. The commitment also makes sound financial sense, as preventing the deterioration of road surfaces by machine surfacing or surface dressing helps reduce the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance repairing potholes now, and in future years. The 1,000th mile was laid at Horham Road in Eye. I am delighted to see our teams deliver on our promise to lay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's roads. Not only that, but we are also due to exceed the 1,000 miles and complete this work sooner than expected. Residents and businesses have always been clear that they want to see roads and infrastructure improved in Suffolk. This continues to be the biggest discussion point in our local communities. By delivering this programme we have been able to focus our budget and resources on improving our roads countywide and keeping them pothole-free for longer. SCC remain committed to focussing our efforts and resources where possible on this type of road improvement.

Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative

SCC working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has been successful in gaining over £3M of funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services. Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre. The council's Children and Young People service also reviewed their portfolio of school buildings along with Concertus. This review resulted in the submission of grant applications for nine schools across the county, all of which were successful. This grant scheme aligns with BEIS' new mission and priorities: fighting coronavirus, backing business, unleashing innovation, and tackling climate change. Through this scheme, it is supporting the council's own commitment to be net zero by 2030 along with the Government's own net zero goals and encouraging further green investment within the UK. Packages of work vary from building to building, but many include the fitting of solar panels and battery storage, as well as improvements to wall or roof insulation and installation of Air Source Heat Pumps to move away from the use of fossil fuels for source of heating.This is a really important step in the council delivering upon its commitment to be net zero by 2030. The estimated cumulative effect of these packages will see the council's carbon footprint reduce by over 360 tonnes of CO_2 per year, the equivalent of taking 120 cars off the road. This is a fantastic result and underlines our commitment to the county and the planet. I would like to thank all those involved in securing this funding, especially Concertus, Vertas and the Greater South East Energy Hub. I look forward to seeing the work rolled out over the coming months. The council hopes to have the work completed at all the sites before the 30 September

Major infrastructure projects now underway in East Anglia

On 4 February 2021 work began on two new bridges on the East Anglian coast, promising to bring huge economic benefits locally. The Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth and the Gull Wing project in Lowestoft. The projects are just 10 miles apart and have a combined cost of £246m. The UK Government acknowledged the two bridges as nationally important infrastructure projects, with the Department for Transport committing a combined total of over £170million to both ventures. Farrans, one of the UK's leading building and civil engineering contractors, is involved with the construction of both projects. In Great Yarmouth, the construction is a joint venture with BAM Nuttall, and in Lowestoft it is the sole responsibility of Farrans. Road closures for both projects have already been implemented as preparation work gets underway. Trial holes for utilities are underway for the Gull Wing in Lowestoft. The Government has committed to levelling up across the country and with these two major projects, we are now starting to see this happen in our region. The Gull Wing will create local jobs and apprenticeship opportunities in Lowestoft and the Waveney area. Local people regularly emphasise the importance of the Gull Wing. It is great news that I shall now be able to tell them that the talking is now over, and the work has begun.

Adopt East launches

October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England. Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo's, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership. The Adopt East will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners. The scale of the organisation means that adopters will have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption. This will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity. In Suffolk we have been working hard to find loving and supportive families for children waiting for adoption. These children have not always had the best start in life and really do deserve to find their forever homes. The adoption process can seem daunting for families, but SCC have a wealth of experience and are there to support families every step of the way. Adopt East is great news for Suffolk as it will mean we can draw on expertise and skills from across the whole region to help us to find the right families for our children.

The Hold welcomes first visitors and opens inaugural exhibition

September saw the public able to access The Hold, Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront. This versatile new building will be the permanent home of the Suffolk Archives Ipswich branch and is shared with the University of Suffolk, who have dedicated teaching spaces within the building. The creation of The Hold, and its associated countywide programme of events and activities, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further funding support from other national organisations and local Suffolk heritage groups. The public are currently able to access 'front of house' areas, including archive inspired displays, the café, shop, and toilets, including a new Changing Places facility. On 2 October, the long-awaited Exhibition Gallery also opened to visitors. The inaugural exhibition, *Global Events: Suffolk Stories*, examines how Suffolk has responded as a community to key global events over the past 100 years. It focuses on the arrival of American service people during the 'Friendly Invasion' of World War Two, as well as the rising tensions and public messaging of the Cold War period, and the collective community response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020. Through original archival documents, photos, music, and film, visitors will be able to explore the similarities and differences between these three global events and understand how Suffolk has changed as a result.

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