

March 2020 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

New street lighting proposed to reduce the county's carbon footprint

SCC is looking to reduce its carbon footprint by investing £9.8m in street lighting, after Cabinet approved an LED street lighting replacement project. Following a review of its street lighting policy in 2010, and with energy prices set to increase at between 8% and 12% a year, the Council has decided the high energy consumption of its existing lanterns could create further pressure on its resources in the near future. The Council owns and maintains over 60,000 streetlights. The proposal to convert the remaining street lighting stock to LED will help to reduce both Suffolk's energy consumption and carbon footprint, whilst providing crisper illumination of the streets for residents. The project will also ensure that Suffolk remains resilient to any future energy price increases. The project will be completed by the autumn of 2022. We recognise the importance of our environment in Suffolk and the impacts of climate change. Where possible, we want to ensure that we protect and enhance the natural environment, decrease carbon emissions and reduce the use of scarce resources, for the well-being of future generations and the natural world. Initiatives such as this are important in helping us to achieve that aim. We will be replacing almost 43,000 lights with new energy saving LED lanterns. This will save approximately 60% of our current energy bill which can be invested elsewhere. We will be able to reduce our carbon usage by around 80%, benefitting residents throughout Suffolk.

County Council approves budget to spend more on services for vulnerable residents

On 13 February 2020, SCC approved its annual budget. The Council will increase its spending power again this coming financial year, particularly in Children's and Adults services, where demand continues to rise year on year. In 2020/2021, the Council's budget will rise to £556million which represents an increase of £37m (7.1%) from 2019/20. We are taking the measured decision to raise council tax by 1.98 per cent and implement a 2 per cent rise in the Adult Social Care Precept, which is ring-fenced for use within our highest demand service. Children's and Adults Services represent around 70% of the Council's overall spend. This year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the three or four-year agreement which is usually offered. As well as addressing the need to maintain funding for key services, the Council will invest an additional £3.5m into two one-year programmes, the Suffolk 2020 fund (£3m) and a highways investment fund (£500k). The Suffolk 2020 fund will be used for projects that can deliver a real difference for local communities. The intention is to adopt good ideas covering more than one area of Suffolk. To qualify for the fund, projects must link to one of the following themes: carbon reduction; carbon offset, road safety, natural environment; built environment; innovation; and use of technology. Each project must offer a clear return on investment through positive economic, social, or environmental impact. The £500k highways investment fund will focus on improving the safety of pupils and parents travelling to and from school, by refreshing lines and cleaning and repairing signs in and around school zones.

Suffolk Highways waives fees for VE and VJ Day Commemoration events

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe and Victory over Japan Days, Suffolk Highways has confirmed it will waive road closure application fees and help support communities with event traffic management. Communities in Suffolk will be organising commemorative events, some of which may require an application to Suffolk Highways for a road closure. It is important for us to work with communities and support events like VE and VJ Day, especially considering this year marks the 75th commemoration of the end of World War II. The cost of road closures and subsequent works associated with event traffic management may be prohibitive for small communities, so we want to do our bit to help make these happen. Communities can find out more about how to apply for a road closure as part of a commemorative event they're holding, by visiting: www.suffolk.gov.uk/eventroadclosure

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