

From

**James Finch**

County Councillor  
Stour Valley Division



4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## **Suffolk County Council Summary Annual Report 2020/21 for the Stoke by Nayland Annual Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

### ➤ **The Year of COVID 19**

The year has been dominated for all of us at National and local level by pulling together to overcome the unprecedented incident of Coronavirus throughout the year. The County Council with the Suffolk fire Service reacted from the very beginning back in March 2020 in many ways to the National guidance given by the Ministry of Health and the NHS. These are just some examples of actions taken by the Council: -

- Immediate response supplying the elderly and vulnerable with food packs so that they were well fed and nobody suffered because of the 1st lock down and were unable to visit the shops.
- The collection and dissemination of local data and advice to guide the local policy for best practice control.
- The organisation of Home Schooling with the local authority in maintained schools
- The introduction of “Home but not Alone” free phone line for the lonely.
- Support Lines for those with Financial Worries.
- The follow up to Test and Trace and now recently totally co-ordinated at the local level since March 2021.
- Local co-ordination of the Vaccination programme with Clinical Commissioning Groups via the Director of Public Health – Stuart Keeble.

There will be lots of lessons learnt for this last year and no doubt our future *modus operandi* both in work and leisure will be different in the future.

We should all thank each other for the collaboration that has been achieved. My belief is that there is “*always good that comes out of bad*”.

### ➤ **Resurfacing of 25% of the Suffolk Highway**

On 5th August it was announced that Suffolk Highways completed its 1000th 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 and reduce the number of potholes. There is still more to do.

### ➤ **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

In September it was announced that 100 fast charging points for electric vehicles were to be built in rural parts of the county. The council have reached out to interested parish and town councils and non-profit organisations to put in fast chargers where there are currently none. The funding will cover the installation and set-up costs, meaning very little expense for the hosts and possibly creating a source of income for them. The up take has been good.

### ➤ **Fostering and Adopting in Suffolk**

In October the Council launched 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 to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. The target has also been doubled for increasing number of new foster parents from 30 to 60 for 2021/22 as a result of the predicted extra numbers required following the Pandemic.

## ➤ **Choice of Schools for September 2021**

On National Offer Day 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place at one of the schools preferred by their parents. Suffolk County Council 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.

## ➤ **Suffolk' Response to the Climate Emergency**

In response to its declaration of a climate emergency, SCC 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 including dozens of changes and new ways of working. Being 'net zero' means the council will remove its carbon emissions where it can; if it is unable to do so, it will compensate for those emissions

## ➤ **Investment in Suffolk's Natural Environment**

The County Council will be investing in tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife. £228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

## ➤ **Suffolk Archives New Home "The Hold" Welcomes First visitors in 2020**

Monday 28 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.

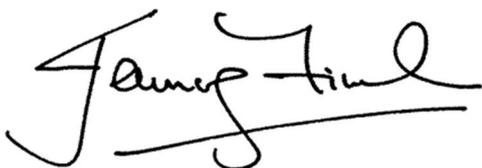
## ➤ **Better Broadband for Suffolk reaches 100,000th customer as the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase contract is agreed with the UK Government.**

By June 3, more than 100,000 households across Suffolk were using faster broadband, thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme. The partnership - between Suffolk County Council, Openreach, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and local councils – has made faster broadband available to around 150,000 premises so far, since being launched in 2010. It means the current total superfast broadband coverage in Suffolk now stands at more than 98 per cent coverage.

The team has plans to go even further, after today announcing an additional phase of work, to provide connectivity to approximately 5,000 more premises, including over 550 businesses, in some of the most rural parts of Suffolk under Phase 3.

## ➤ **Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative.**

Suffolk County Council (SCC), working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has secured £3+M 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. All this is to help reduce the County Council's running costs for the future.



**James Finch, County Councillor for The Stour Valley Division**