

December 2018 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk County Council's budget setting for 2019/2020

On 14 November, Suffolk County Council published key papers which mark the beginning of a three-month process to agree Suffolk County Council's budget for 2019/20. The papers detail how SCC proposes to increase its overall budget by nearly £15 million (3%) to £514.8 million in 2019/20, with specific increases in the council's children and young people and adult care budgets which support Suffolk's most vulnerable people. This includes accounting for an expected significant increase in the cost of providing services and inflation. The council is also looking to maximise the financial contribution from ten long-term programmes which focus on transforming how the council delivers its services and works with other authorities and public service partners. The papers also summarise an initial list of potential savings totalling £11.2 million, which are required to help balance the overall budget. These include proposals to maximise income, as well as cost, grant, service and staffing reductions. To balance its budget for the next financial year, the council needs to save around £25m. We have some really tough calls to make if we are to balance the budget in the next financial year and in years beyond. There are no easy options left. What can be in no doubt is that this council remains absolutely committed to supporting the most vulnerable young people and older residents across Suffolk. In fact, we are actually planning to spend more in these crucial services next year as demand for these services increases year-on-year. SCC will not know the full extent of its grant from central government until 6 December at the earliest. After that, the budget proposals will be finalised and then agreed in public at the Cabinet meeting in January 2019 and the Council meeting in February 2019.

Suffolk wins praise at the national Community Energy Awards 2018

On 5 November, it was announced that the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership has received a national award for supporting local communities to be more energy efficient. An expert panel of judges awarded the Local Authority Award to the Partnership for its close working with local organisations. This includes exploring how organisations can be more energy efficient, helping to source funding, producing a community energy toolkit, providing technical support and investing in energy efficiency installations. In addition, over 120 community buildings have received in-depth advice and support to be more energy efficient. The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership is a collaboration of SCC, all Suffolk's borough and district councils and The Environment Agency. It supports the county's communities, businesses and residents to reduce carbon emissions, realise the economic benefits of reducing energy consumption and adapt to the future impacts of climate change. Its work has brought in significant amounts of external funding to Suffolk, running highly-successful projects for its customers.

The Hold construction is underway

Construction of The Hold building is well underway, with groundworks, piling, and foundations all part of this phase of construction. The Hold will deliver a new home for the majority of Suffolk's unique archival collections, as well as state-of-the-art public facilities including seminar rooms and a 200-seat auditorium. The new building, which will be situated near the junction of Fore Street and Grimwade Street in Ipswich, will be part of the University of Suffolk campus and will be run by the county and the university together. Work began on the construction of The Hold building in August, with the demolition of a derelict building at the northern end of the site. The construction will focus on the strong rooms first, where the archives will be kept. The building will formally open to the public in Spring 2020.

A useful link to share with residents and community groups

'Can Do Health and Care' is about local health and care services working in a more joined up way. Health, care, voluntary and community organisations in Suffolk and North East Essex are working together with a shared vision and plans to improve the health and care outcomes for the one million people living locally. Their newsletter keeps local residents and community groups up to date with some of their key projects and news and can be accessed at <http://www.candohealthandcare.co.uk/news/edition-3/>.

Some highlights from their latest newsletter are the launch of a suicide prevention app in Suffolk, a new group to support people in East and Central Suffolk who are caring for loved ones with mental health conditions and a community café that has opened in Rougham as part of a village initiative designed to combat loneliness and isolation.

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