

Annual Report 2015/16 - Cllr Gary Green

- **SCC freezes Council Tax for sixth year in a row**

SCC's share of council tax is to be frozen for a sixth year in a row. This means that Suffolk residents will not pay any more than they did in 2010/11.

The council has made savings in excess of £170million since the Government's deficit reduction programme began in 2011/2012 and faces the need to make further savings of over £80million during the next two years. The budget passed in April saw a ZERO% increase in base Council Tax. The Administration decided to implement the 2% National Adult Social Care Levy to support the implementation of the National Living Wage. The budget for Adult Social Care and Children's Services increased. SCC has achieved its target savings and looks set to achieve next years.

Key message- In 2013 Suffolk Conservatives pledged that they would not increase Council Tax for four years if elected, and that manifesto promise has been upheld. The National Adult Social Care levy was implemented to help fund the National Living Wage.

- **SCC's Children's Serviced Department rated 'Good' by Ofsted**

Suffolk County Council's Children's Services has been rated GOOD by Ofsted following the publication of its inspection report on 15th February 2016. The report praises the work of the council in protecting and looking after children and young people, with some areas of outstanding practice highlighted in the report. The inspection was carried out between 23 November and 17 December 2015.

Suffolk now sits in the top 22% of local authorities in the country. 78 councils have been inspected so far under Ofsted's new framework. No authority has been judged outstanding and of the last 17 inspections across the country, just one authority had been judged GOOD, until Suffolk's rating.

Key message- Whilst SCC Children's Services meets its savings targets we are actually improving the service that we provide. In comparison NCC (which has similar demographics) has injected an extra £30m into its service and has consistently been rated 'Inadequate'.

- **Education attainment in Suffolk**

There has been a 4% rise in the number of students getting five or more A*-C grades, including English and Maths. It means that 56% of Suffolk's year 11s got the expected level of attainment. The validated figure for 2014 was 52%. Suffolk's results have increased by 2.6% from last year's provisional results and see Suffolk rise 17 places in the overall league table, going from 124th to 107th.

77% of 11-year-olds achieved level 4 or higher in their SAT tests in the three subjects in 2015 – up from 73% in 2014.

This closes the gap to the national average to just 3%. This is the third consecutive year the gap between Suffolk and the national figure has closed. Suffolk was 7% points behind the national average in 2012 - the results show Suffolk as the most improved local authority in the entire Eastern region, with a higher percentage rise than the other 10 local authorities in the area. Suffolk has also improved in the national ranking and is now in 134th place out of 152. This is an improvement of six places from last year.

Progress in Writing between Key Stages 1 and 2 is another improvement. The percentage of pupils making the expected progress went up from 89% in 2014 to 91% this year. The percentage of children making expected progress from Key Stage 1 to 2 in Reading and Maths also increased – with both seeing a 1% point rise. In all three subject areas the increase in Suffolk was greater than the national rise.

The gap in performance between Suffolk's disadvantaged pupils and other pupils has also narrowed by 5% compared to a 1% increase nationally.

- **Government green light for third crossing at Lake Lothing in Lowestoft and the Wet Dock crossing in Ipswich**

As part of the Chancellor's budget announcements, Suffolk featured strongly with the green light being given for both Lowestoft's third crossing over Lake Lothing and the new Wet Dock crossing in Ipswich.

Lowestoft will get the third crossing over Lake Lothing after many years of campaigning and a recent petition signed by over 10,000 people. The Prime Minister committed to the crossing prior to the last General Election, committing the Government to deliver a new crossing by 2020. With this further pledge of £70 million the county council finally has the funding firmly in place to press ahead with the detailed planning required in order to bring about a third crossing over Lake Lothing. This is a massive piece of work and is estimated to cost in the region of £80-100 million, but in addition to the £70 million pledged by central Government, SCC will work to source the remaining money from local funding sources.

The third crossing will provide critical regional infrastructure for Suffolk and the wider eastern counties, as people and businesses move through Lowestoft to access the growing enterprise zone with its array of business and development opportunities.

The approved business case by Suffolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP followed extensive analysis of options and potential impact and consultation and engagement with the local business community. The benefits of the scheme in the business case are reduced journey times for commuters and businesses and the alleviation of congestion. The project supports the continued development of future business growth in Lowestoft and the town's regeneration.

In addition to the third crossing in Lowestoft, the go-ahead has also been given for a new wet dock crossing in Ipswich, which will span the waterfront area of the town to connect communities with a new road infrastructure that will also serve a business and innovation centre based on an island in the dock itself..

Key message- The Administration continue to invest in key Capital projects across the County ensuring proper infrastructure and continued economic development.

- **Broadband rollout on target**

A resolution has now been reached between DCMS and the EU which will enable us to spend our full £30m of public funding, as well as the monies clawed back from the first contract a total of £33.9m on Phase 2

Work on the Broadband rollout continues as we progress Phase 1 of the Superfast Extension Programme (the 2nd contract). The first phase of rollout will be shared onto a map on the SCC website, and the second phase will be added within the next couple of months. To date, we have enabled 35 cabinets, and reached over 3,000 premises under the Superfast Extension Programme, towards a target of over 1,000 cabinets, and over 50,000 premises by the end of 2019.

For more information and updates please visit www.betterbroadbandsuffolk.com

Key message- The Administration continue to hold BT to account to push the rollout of Broadband across the County. This will become more challenging as we reach the final percentages in the most rural areas but this remains a priority for SCC.

- **Rural Transport Provision**

The changes to how Rural Transport is provided will bring a positive difference to communities, providing residents with a single phone number for each area. The whole county is covered so there are no longer any areas where there may have been gaps in service. We've worked hard on our approach throughout this service transformation, engaging with range of people and organizations including those who currently provide services. This has helped us develop these new service contracts. The people who have been supplying these services have told us what is needed, not the other way around. As part of this project, we took into account the needs of all residents who use these services to ensure there will be no issues with access, particularly for elderly and disabled residents.

This excellent new service demonstrates that despite a difficult financial climate the Conservative Administration is achieving savings and improving service delivery through sound financial management, robust contracts and listening to what people really want their services to deliver. Labour have misled the public through a series of petitions designed to scaremonger.. SCC is leading the way, improving services whilst reducing costs and safeguarding the most vulnerable in our society.

Key message- This Service redesign has been built around the need of the users. It is another excellent example of making a service better at a reduced cost. This smarter, more streamlined service will be easier to use and will allow users to have greater access to the public transport network in Suffolk. It is a great success story

- **SCC is one of the top places for lesbian, gay and bisexual people to work, according to the latest national index from the charity [Stonewall](http://www.stonewall.org).**

An awards ceremony on 19 January 2016 Stonewall announced which organisations have been included in the Workplace Equality Index for 2016. Suffolk County Council has been successful in maintaining a place in the Top 100 at position 78. This represents a significant rise of 20 places compared to 2015 when Stonewall introduced more challenging criteria. This success demonstrates Suffolk County Council is a good place to work for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) staff and that SCC makes efforts to ensure that staff across the organisation understand how to support their LGB&T colleagues.

- **£1bn Devolution Deal announced for East Anglia**

Government and local councils and LEPs has led to a proposed deal worth over £1bn for East Anglia. As part of the deal, announced by George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, East Anglia will receive:

- £900m (£30m a year for the next 30 years) to invest in infrastructure
- £175m to invest in housing

The Proposed Deal, which sets out a fundamentally different relationship between Government and local public services, was negotiated by Leaders from councils across Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP. The Proposed Deal would see decisions currently being made by Government on such things as infrastructure, growth, employment and skills being made in East Anglia in the future.

The Proposed Deal requires the creation of a Combined Authority and directly elected Mayor and it is proposed that the first mayoral elections would be in May 2017 alongside county council elections.

The directly elected Mayor would act as Chair to the East Anglia Combined Authority and would exercise the following powers and functions devolved from Government:

- Responsibility for a multi-year, consolidated and, devolved local transport budget
- Responsibility for a new Key Route Network of local authority roads that will be managed and maintained by the Combined Authority on behalf of the Mayor
- Powers over strategic planning and housing, including £175m ring-fenced funding to deliver an ambitious target of new homes

The new East Anglia Combined Authority, working with the Mayor, would receive the following powers:

- Control of a new additional £30 million a year funding allocation over 30 years, to be invested to the East Anglia Single Investment Fund, to boost growth
- Responsibility for chairing an area-based review of 16+ skills provision, the outcomes of which will be taken forward in line with the principles of the devolved arrangements, and devolved 19+ adult skills funding from 2018/19.
- Joint responsibility with the government to co-design the new National Work and Health Programme designed to focus on those with a health condition or disability and the very long term unemployed.

More information can be found here www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-anglia-devolution-deal