

July 2022 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Council objects to Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposals

On June 8, SCC confirmed its intention to object to the proposals for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN pylon run. A new network is needed to deliver electricity between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury, to cope with the increasing amounts of renewable and low carbon electricity being generated around East Anglia. This is National Grid's East Anglia GREEN proposal, which would see many pylons installed across the county, affecting the Suffolk countryside and its communities. But the council does not support this proposal as it stands. It believes that there are better ways to manage the project, for example involving an undersea network which has not been fully investigated. The council has been campaigning for government ministers and officials to introduce a more co-ordinated off-shore approach to meet the demands of all the energy projects in the region. The council absolutely supports ambitions for renewable energy and the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050. We recognise the benefits that can come from this project, and we continue to work with the government to develop coordinated off-shore transmission. However, the council objects to the proposal for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN as it stands. I am determined that Suffolk will not suffer unnecessarily as a consequence, we will continue to protect our communities, residents and natural environment. SCC has been lobbying government for 11 years on the issue of better coordination for off-shore transmission. We are demanding that a more collaborative solution is found to manage the different network connection requirements coming into Suffolk and East Anglia, and that all network options are fully explored. Alongside other regional councillors and MPs, through our OffSET group (the Off-Shore Electricity Grid Task Force), we regularly speak with government ministers and officials to express our concerns about the impact of these projects on Suffolk, and East Anglia. We have written directly to the Minister, to continue to represent Suffolk's communities and residents, to re-emphasise the recent points made by OffSET. Details can be found on National Grid's website: [National Grid website](#).

Extra funding agreed by Cabinet to fund new SEND places

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet. SCC's Cabinet agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools. So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning. The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools. This significant investment shows our ongoing commitment to improving our SEND provision and making sure all children and young people in Suffolk have the best education to suit their needs. Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million.

Bury St Edmunds archives branch starts planning for the future

It was announced on June 23 that SCC is looking to the future as it considers plans for its archives branch in Bury St Edmunds. As part of long-term planning for the service, SCC is looking at options for either remaining at its current location in Raingate Street or moving to the planned new Western Way Development. We need to ensure that our archives service is fit for the future, operates efficiently and provides value for money for our residents. It also needs to be accessible to all our

visitors, whether that is at our existing branch in Raingate Street or elsewhere in Bury St Edmunds. Recent inspections have shown that if the service were to remain at Raingate Street, alterations requiring significant investment would be needed for the long-term future sustainability of the building, as well as to provide a modern and inclusive archive service in the town. The planned hub development at Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, will introduce state of the art replacement leisure facilities, as well as health, education and other public services to a site which is already a close neighbour of West Suffolk College, the Abbeygate Sixth Form, several schools and the existing council offices. It is expected to open to the public in 2025. SCC will be working with users of the branch, depositors of archive documents, and other key local stakeholders to show what the archives service would be able to offer in the future at either Raingate Street or the Western Way development, as well as how they can input into the council's decision. No decision has been made and any proposed options for the Bury St Edmunds Archives Branch will be considered by SCC's Cabinet later in the year.

Lowestoft convenience store owner prosecuted for selling illegal tobacco

A Suffolk shop proprietor was prosecuted for selling illicit tobacco following Trading Standards' continued crackdown on this serious crime. The owner of Town Mini Market, a convenience store on Bevan Street East, Lowestoft, appeared at Ipswich Magistrates Court on the 24 June having been charged with breaching tobacco packaging regulations. Suffolk Trading Standards received intelligence that the owner was selling illicit tobacco at his store, and subsequently carried out a test purchase, during which illegal tobacco was sold to an undercover operative posing as a customer. Following the sting, a raid was conducted in September 2021 as part of Operation CeCe, a National Trading Standards initiative in partnership with HMRC to tackle illegal tobacco. This resulted in the seizure of approximately 2,000 cigarettes and more than 7kg of hand rolling tobacco. The tobacco seized did not comply with tobacco packaging regulations and contained health warnings which were not written in English, as well as the packaging itself being of an incorrect colour. In sentencing, Mr Shokoult was issued a fine of £5000, £190 surcharge and £3302.50 in costs (£8492.50 total) . Those wishing to protect themselves from inadvertently buying illegal tobacco can look out for the following: A lack of health warnings on the packet, unknown brands, prices that look too good to be true, packaging that isn't plain olive green or contains text that is not in English

Suffolk leading the way in UK's water conservation

A new scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water. Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops. Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops. Local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme. Organised by SCC, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe. The Felixstowe scheme is one of only four being trialled across Europe, overseen by FRESH4Cs, a cooperation project between 10 UK, Belgian and Dutch partners. FRESH4Cs has received funding from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The drainage water is sourced from the Kingsfleet near Felixstowe and travels along a 12km pipeline to local farms where it is stored in existing reservoirs ready for irrigation. The pipeline route has been carefully plotted to avoid areas of conservation and archaeological sites.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk