

September 2021 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils regarding Afghan refugees

On 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is crystal clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort. All councils in Suffolk are committed to this cause. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other refugees entering the UK. In the coming days and weeks, the district, borough and county councils will continue working with the Government to do what we can to provide assistance to vulnerable refugees. Times like this call for acts of humanity. Suffolk will play its part.

Make one simple change today in a bid to tackle climate change

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change. In early November, the eyes of the world will be on Glasgow. This is when the COP26 conference takes place. It will be a momentous event and I expect some significant decisions and agreements to be made, as the world continues to combat climate change and reduce its carbon emissions. But how will an international event affect each of us in Suffolk? Although COP26 will be an event attended by Presidents and Prime Ministers, it will impact us all. COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change. This has been the message for a long time of course, but we must all be changing our behaviours and choosing to use less energy. Global industry, national corporations and governments must lead the way to enable us all to make greener choices. But slowing climate change is everyone's responsibility, we each have a duty to tackle this situation and play our part. SCC has been addressing climate change challenge for many years, but we know that the organisation must be doing more and doing it more quickly. This is agreed across all Suffolk's authorities which is why, together, we have recently approved the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan - a document to keep us accountable in our ambition to make Suffolk a carbon neutral county by 2030. I'm proud of the work SCC has been doing for a number of years now. We are planting trees and hedgerows. We are supporting businesses with advice and funding to reduce their carbon emissions. We are running schemes to reduce the cost of solar panels on homes. We are providing the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling. We are providing greener ways to travel. We are installing electric vehicle charging points in rural areas. There is much, much more besides, but we are working hard to develop this work. With COP26 just three months away, organisations and authorities across Suffolk are planning events across the county to talk net zero and being carbon neutral. Whether at the start of your net zero journey, or you're looking to make the next step, these events will guide and inspire you.

The www.greensuffolk.org website will be updated soon with these Suffolk events

Suffolk targets devolution talks with Government

It was announced on August 17 that public sector leaders in Suffolk say they welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) group has a track record of effective partnership working. These robust relationships enable more innovative ways of working, including exploring opportunities for devolution as part of a County Deal. Suffolk is an ideal place to help Government demonstrate how levelling up can work in diverse geographies. Suffolk has a strong offer to make to Government and we would welcome early discussions with MHCLG Ministers to explore proposals for a County Deal ahead of the White Paper being published. The Government wrote to councils in July 2021, setting out its ambition to make available to county areas the kind of devolved decision-making powers and public funding currently enjoyed by larger cities and urban areas. It's part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and will see a White Paper published in the coming months. Suffolk is known for working well together. Whether it's partners joining forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, pooling public funding

for the greater good or developing shared strategic priorities, collaboration is what we're good at. It is understood that Suffolk's approach involving all councils is rare among other expressions of interest being submitted to Government, a point that has been welcomed by the county's seven MPs. In an accompanying letter to Robert Jenrick MP, they said:

"We are writing to wholeheartedly support the vision set out, collectively, by Suffolk County Council and all of Suffolk's District and Borough Councils. We believe this unity of purpose behind taking the next step in devolution through a County Deal can not just help persuade you that we should be in the vanguard of the next stage of devolution, but also that Suffolk can use such a deal to deliver better services locally.

Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns

Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers. This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere. Suffolk residents have until 27 September 2021 to register their interest, for free and with no obligation, to join the group-buying scheme to have solar panels installed at their home. Not only does Solar Together Suffolk offer solar panels, but also optional battery storage and retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels. I am delighted that we're able to run Solar Together Suffolk for another year, as we have seen a real appetite amongst residents to play their part and invest in ways to reduce their carbon emissions. This is one of the many schemes we are offering, as Suffolk County Council aims to make the county net zero by 2030.

How does it work? Until 27 September: Householders can register to become part of the group, for free and without obligation, at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk

On 28 September: Pre-vetted UK solar PV installers participate in an auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations. After the auction, registered households will receive a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration. If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system. Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment. SCC brings [Solar Together Suffolk](http://www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk) to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service adds four new enhanced appliances to its fleet

On August 27 Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service unveiled its state-of-the-art rescue vehicles and equipment to equip firefighters with the latest technology for rescues. Four new "enhanced rescue tenders" will be based at Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Newmarket and Ipswich, giving cover across the county and strengthening the emergency response across Suffolk's communities. The new equipment and vehicles are also the latest innovations in green technology, supporting SCC's climate emergency declaration and ambitions to be net zero by 2030. The fire appliances are the first in Suffolk to be fitted with solar panels, have more fuel-efficient engines and also carry battery powered hydraulic rescue equipment. SCC aims to be a net zero authority by 2030, and I applaud the Service for setting an excellent example by embedding this ambition in its procurement.

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