

## **June 2023 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks**

### **£10 million programme to fix residential roads**

Local road surfaces in villages and residential areas in Suffolk should be blitzed as part of a new £10 million programme, Suffolk County Council has announced today (25<sup>th</sup> May). The extra funding will nearly double Suffolk Highways' £11 million annual roads maintenance budget, but be targeted at smaller residential streets which are typically maintained less frequently than busier A and B roads. The announcement was made by Suffolk County Council's leader, Cllr Matthew Hicks, at the authority's annual general meeting.

"Let me be clear, the state of some of our roads is not good enough. That is why today I am announcing a major investment to improve roads across the county where people live. Those smaller roads often in estates or off the beaten track in our villages that are rutted and in need of some love and attention. To do this we will set aside a further £10 million to be spent over the next 20 months reaching these locations across our county and I look forward to this being delivered with our new partner Milestone."

### **Support for Ukrainian refugees moving to private rented accommodation**

Suffolk County Council has announced a one-off £2,000 support grant for Ukrainian refugees moving on from their host into their own accommodation. The Independent Living Payment will be available to Ukrainian Refugees, who are moving into private rented accommodation after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Guests must have been living in Suffolk for a minimum of two months and be registered on the Suffolk Homes for Ukraine scheme to be eligible for the payment. The funding can be used for any associated housing costs, including furniture, moving costs or travel to work. The support can be used towards accommodation which is furnished or unfurnished, and accommodation can be in Suffolk or out of county as long as a copy of the new tenancy agreement is provided. Ukrainian guests can apply for the Independent Living Payment by visiting [www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine) and completing the application form. Application forms can also be requested by emailing [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk). We are grateful to all the hosts who have welcomed Ukrainian guests into our county and supported them to thrive in our local communities. This support will assist our Ukrainian guests to move on from their hosts and live independently in Suffolk. Suffolk Refugee Support can provide general advice and support for any Ukrainian Refugees looking to live independently in Suffolk, such as help with education, employment, access to immigration advice, housing, utilities, welfare benefits and more. Visit <https://suffolkrefugee.org.uk/> for more information. Suffolk continues to be in need of new sponsors to support Ukrainian families who are not yet ready to leave sponsorship. If you think you can help, or know of anybody who could, please get in touch. You can register with Suffolk County Council at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine).

### **SCC has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk**

SCC approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024. Suffolk Libraries currently receives £5.9m per year from Suffolk County Council, however the service is forecasting a deficit of £60k per month from April 2023. The service has cited increases in service costs, a reduction in income opportunities following the Coronavirus Pandemic and rising inflation, as causes of the deficit. This means it is no longer possible for the service to continue operating at its current level of service, within its current contract value. At Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting, the council has approved plans to absorb this cost pressure, funding Suffolk Libraries an additional £720k per year, through to the end of the current contract in July 2024. This additional funding will support Suffolk Libraries to continue delivering its highly valued services to Suffolk Residents.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said: "We recognise the important role that Libraries play in the community, they offer so much more than just books;

providing community spaces which bring people together, to learn, socialise, read, and take part in activities. We are proud of the work Suffolk libraries do, which is recognised nationally, and we are committed to supporting the service to maintain this high standard. This is why Suffolk County Council is increasing its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to support them to continue delivering the outstanding service they provide for our residents.”

The council has previously made a commitment to continue to support Suffolk Libraries and in February, the council agreed to fund an additional £250k in the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year to help with the increased costs Highlighted by Suffolk Libraries. This £250k for the first quarter of the year is included within the overall figure agreed by Cabinet, of an additional £720k for the 2023/24 financial year. The council also supported Suffolk Libraries with £155,000 for initiatives to support residents with Cost of Living and support for Digital Inclusion in the 2022/23 financial year. In addition, the Council continues to successfully access Section 106 funding to support ongoing building developments required to ensure buildings are fit for purpose and support service delivery. Bruce Leeke, CEO of Suffolk Libraries, said:

“We are delighted that Suffolk County Council has agreed to provide us with additional funding for the remainder of our current contract. Our direct library costs have significantly increased over the last few years and the pandemic impacted our ongoing fundraising and income generation initiatives. This has combined to create a budget deficit which would have made it difficult to maintain the same comprehensive service for the people of Suffolk without additional support. We have a very positive and supportive relationship with the county council and this decision shows that councillors appreciate the responsiveness, skill and passion of our colleagues working at the heart of every major community in Suffolk.”

### **Suffolk residents urged to #ShakeltOut when recycling**

A new campaign by Suffolk Waste Partnership is encouraging people to empty plastic bags and not throw them in recycling. The #ShakeltOut campaign has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to encourage households in Suffolk to help improve recycling rates across the county by making sure black bin bags and other plastic sacks are not thrown in with recyclable materials.

#ShakeltOut is encouraging people to shake out plastic bags and keep recycling clean, dry, and loose.

The Partnership, which comprises Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, and West Suffolk Council, says more than a quarter (26%) of the materials in Suffolk’s recycling bins in 2022/23 were not able to be processed as they were spoiled. Items that contributed to spoiled recycling collections included:

Materials that were not clean and dry, or contained food and drink residue

Rubbish sacks or plastic bags containing recycling

Non-recyclable items, such as nappies and food waste

Plastic bags and rubbish sacks are a particular problem – recycling handlers can’t see what’s inside them and they are often full of rubbish or other non-recyclable items.

This means bags are removed during the sorting process to avoid spoiling other good recycling. Any removed bags are then sent for disposal.

We know from previous research that 73% of Suffolk residents are concerned about the environment and most people want to get their recycling right. Our Shake It Out campaign aims to help residents better understand their recycling services and ensure items are clean, dry and loose when they are placed in their recycling bins. We appreciate that some households may collect their recycling in plastic bags, to make it easy to carry out. This great work can be wasted if recycling is then added to your wheelie bin in a plastic bag. To find out more about the #ShakeltOut campaign and for more information on recycling in Suffolk, visit [www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out](http://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out)

**Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division**

**Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : [matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk)**