

November 2015 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

GCSE results show Suffolk on the rise

Provisional GCSE results released show Suffolk's 16 year olds have performed better than the national figure for the first time since 2007. The statistics from the Department for Education show 53.4% of Suffolk pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths. The national figure for all schools was 52.8%. 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. Suffolk is making significant improvements with a higher percentage of pupils making the expected levels of progress in English and Maths – the county climbs from 110th to 75th in Maths and from 119th to 87th in English (out of 151 local authorities). Students making expected progress in English have narrowed the gap to the national figure, from a gap of 3.5% to 0.7%. Expected progress in Maths is now at the national figure; last year's provisional results showed Suffolk as 3.6% below. Raising educational attainment is our top priority and these latest figures show that students, parents and schools are working well together to secure that improvement we all want to see. Ofsted has recognised that our Raising the Bar strategy is moving us in the right direction, and these results reaffirm this strategy is enacting the change we desired.

Promoting a new vision for Ipswich

A high-level Suffolk delegation travelled to London last month to promote a new vision for Ipswich. The group sought to attract investment and raise awareness of the significant opportunities for housing and employment growth in the Greater Ipswich area - with a particular focus on the Waterfront. Public and private sectors came together via SCC, Ben Gummer MP, Ipswich Central, the Chamber of Commerce, New Anglia LEP, the borough council and University Campus Suffolk, to attend MIPIM (Marche International des Professionnels d'Immobilier) and promote development opportunities in the town. The show is the UK's largest exhibition and conference for property professionals and will provide a market place for UK players and international investors to meet, discuss projects and opportunities and do business. The Ipswich stand, focusing on a new Ipswich Vision, enabled visitors to the exhibition to find out more about the town. We are both proud of, and ambitious for, our county town. Ipswich has so much going for it: good connectivity to the rest of the UK and proximity to London; national and international assets such as Adastral Park and Felixstowe Port on its doorstep; and a developing Waterfront with superb amenities. This was a great opportunity to promote all that our county town has to offer.

Thousands attend Suffolk Skills Show

Suffolk businesses turned out in their hundreds to support the second annual Suffolk Skills Show; a skills and careers event reaching over 4,500 young people. The event set out to engage with Suffolk's young people and provide an insight into the career opportunities available to them locally. The show, which took place at Trinity Park in Ipswich, targeted those aged between 11 and 24. The diverse range of businesses exhibiting at the event worked hard to ensure those attending left with their eyes opened to the many career streams across Suffolk. There were many interactive indoor and outdoor stands; showcasing opportunities in energy, IT & technology, finance and business services, creative digital, agriculture, construction, motor vehicle, advanced manufacturing, ports and logistics as well as HM Forces and a 'have a go' area where attendees were able to try their hand at new skills. In all, around 4,500 young people attended the show, and have had the chance to see the amazing opportunities for young people in the county across a wide range of sectors and companies. Developing the aspirations of Suffolk's young people is a key priority of our Raising the Bar programme.

County Council progress the campaign for A12 Four-Village Bypass

SCC's cabinet have agreed to set aside up to £450,000 towards building a business case for a major highways project to develop a new bypass of the villages of Marlesford, Little Glemham, Stratford St Andrew and Farnham. This project, commonly known as the 'A12 Four Village Bypass', is an infrastructure priority for the county council. Suffolk Coastal District Council will also discuss proposals to contribute £50,000 towards the support of the business case at a future cabinet meeting. Following a public enquiry in 1995, the Government accepted recommendations that this road should be developed to alleviate the constraints and impact of traffic on this stretch of the A12. In 2001, the road became the responsibility of SCC and the bypass concept remains the authority's preferred development option if the funding can be secured. The current estimated cost ranges from £45m to £105m, depending on the carriageway provision that is made. The future business case to be discussed with the government will consider both options and we are fighting hard to ensure that vital schemes in Suffolk secure the funding they need.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk