

County Councillor's Annual Report to Parishes in the Thredling Division of Suffolk – 2010

This is a report on what we have achieved as a Council in the last year in particular and in the last five years in some instances. It can be seen that many of the achievements have been in accordance with our manifesto promises.

- **Keeping Council Tax down - (manifesto ✓)** - this year we have delivered the lowest Council Tax increase in our history – for the second consecutive year. It has taken us five years to increase council tax by as much as Labour and the Lib Dems did in one, with their 18.5%.
- **Strong financial management - (manifesto ✓)** - through good housekeeping, cutting bureaucracy and working more efficiently, we are saving a further £9.3million this year, making us currently the second most cost-effective County Council in England (behind Kent – who have double our budget).

This Conservative administration has saved £70million over its first four years. At the end of this financial year, that will be £80 million in five years – equivalent to an average of £300,000 a week.

- **Investment in priority services - (manifesto ✓)** - despite the government taking a further £11million out of our grant this year to give to other councils, our good housekeeping has enabled us to invest an extra £15.5million in priority areas, such as:
 - Road maintenance - £1.5million
 - Caring for older people - £4million
 - Safeguarding vulnerable children - £3.3million
- **Improving Education and Skills - (manifesto ✓)** - we have secured £23million of investment to build a sixth form college in Lowestoft. This follows on from securing £65million for Suffolk One. This is a vital part of our determination to drive up educational standards across Suffolk.
- **Homeshield Plus - (manifesto ✓)** - we have just launched 'Homeshield Plus', which provides a comprehensive service to all those aged over 80 who live at home - the only such proactive service of its type in the country.
- **Creating the Greenest County - (manifesto ✓)** - our Greenest County initiative received another boost in November, when we received the Green Apple award for our innovative re-use and recycling grant fund for community and voluntary organisations.

- Our 'Creating the Greenest County' entry to the LGC Awards 2010 has been short-listed.
- **Keeping Suffolk moving** - during the cold spell, County Council lorries gritted 101,000 miles of road using 18,000 tonnes of salt. Front-line workers made unscheduled visits to vulnerable people at their own behest to check they were ok.
- **New strategic direction** - We have pioneered a cross-sector partnership approach to delivering services, breaking down barriers and cutting duplication between organisations across the public and voluntary sector.
- **National recognition** - Together with our partners, we have been awarded three Green Flags for excellence by the Audit Commission as part of their Comprehensive Area Assessment. These green flags relate to the development of green technologies, coastal protection at Bawdsey and tackling prostitution in Ipswich.

Suffolk is the only area in the country to receive as many as three green flags – yet another Suffolk Conservative first.

This follows on from our four consecutive years being rated as a top-performing Council.

Among many positive comments, the Audit Commission also reported that:

- the Councillors and senior managers have demonstrated strong leadership and are driving the organisation forward delivering what is important to local people
 - the Council's use of resources is good and has scored 3 out of 4. This is because it manages its resources well, delivering a wide range of efficiency savings and reducing its costs.
 - Local authority fostering and adoption agencies are good and private fostering arrangements are outstanding.
- The County Council's Procurement Team is one of only 90 organisations worldwide to have won a prestigious award for procurement.
 - Meanwhile, CSD, our public / private partnership with Mid Suffolk and BT, has been short-listed for no fewer than three awards.

Cllr. Eddy Alcock – Spring 2010.