

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2017

The last year has been a year of achievement for the County Council.

While a great number of changes have taken place, the culture of the council has been driven in a much more responsive, flexible direction. While there is much still to do, it's reputation has improved.

We have not ducked the extremely difficult decisions that have been needed, including in Children's Services, where we are determined to deliver the change needed.

All achievements over the last year must be seen against a backdrop of ever-shrinking budgets and growing demand for a number of our services.

At a service level, achievements have been seen across our service areas.

Norfolk moves into top-half of the GCSE league table - Provisional GCSE results for 2016 have put Norfolk above the national average for the first time in a decade.

A unique partnership - Norfolk County Council and children's charity, Barnardo's, are developing an imaginative new approach to working together to better support children and their families. The new service, which we anticipate having in place by summer 2017, will focus on edge of care provision; supporting more children to remain at home with their families (where it is safe to do so), as opposed to coming into the care system.

Getting more of Norfolk's young people into top universities - the Norfolk Higher Education Scheme has gone from strength to strength this year. It was founded to link up sixth forms and colleges in Norfolk to share opportunities for university applicants - such as mock interviews, workshops, outside speakers and university visits. All 33 schools and colleges in the county have signed up to the scheme. This year, having opened up to all Norfolk students applying to any university, 1,220 have already registered. In summer 2016, 48 Norfolk state school students were offered places at Oxford or Cambridge University. Increasing numbers of care leavers are moving into higher education.

Growing our own social workers – recruiting and retaining social workers is a challenge for many councils. In summer 2016, NCC launched our own social care academy which offers training and mentoring to social workers.

In Good Company - Loneliness can cause ill health and reduce people's ability to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In November 2016 we launched our IGC campaign – working with partners, including charities and the local media - to combat loneliness and raise awareness of the wide range of support on offer in Norfolk.

Giving a warm welcome to Syrian refugee families - Norfolk has a long tradition of extending the hand of friendship to those in need and this has held true in

this case of welcoming Syrian refugees to the county. At the beginning of February, the first five Syrian families arrived in Norwich. extensive work was done with district councils, health authorities, schools and voluntary groups to get everything in place to welcome the families, all of whom have young children. We were also inundated with offers of help and support from Norfolk residents and local faith and voluntary groups.

Acting against domestic violence – in December 2016, we reached the 500 mark for training domestic abuse ‘champions’ in frontline professions to help people suffering abuse.

Better broadband - the latest tranche of Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) will see high-speed broadband coverage reaching more than 95% of Norfolk home and businesses by spring 2020. Currently, 87% of households and businesses in Norfolk can get a superfast broadband service, more than double the number four years ago (42%). But we won't be satisfied until everyone in Norfolk has access, so we will continue to push for more investment and make the money we already have go as far as possible.

Integrated transport strategy – along with Suffolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP, we have commissioned Mouchel to research and produce an integrated transport strategy, covering air, road, rail, buses, sustainable transport and ports, which will be used to lever in transport investment from Government. The work was commissioned in October 2016 and is due to be published shortly.

Awards - The Library and Information Service won the national Libraries Change Lives Award for its pioneering work in partnership with Norfolk Public Health to promote healthier lifestyles. This work is being taken up as an example of good practice by libraries across the UK. Enhancing the reputation of NLIS

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