

Annual Report of Cllr Sarah Suggitt

The past year has been one like no other and I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to all the volunteers and workers who have tirelessly kept going throughout.

At Breckland our top priorities were to protect the lives and livelihoods of our residents.

Over the past year we have issued over £50m in financial support. We want to make sure every business in Breckland gets the help it needs to recover from the pandemic and continue to thrive.

In addition to this we have delivered food parcels, set up welfare calls for the vulnerable and isolated, taken on covid support officers to offer advice, support and guidance and introduced a covid safe scheme helping consumers feel assured that businesses have in place the appropriate PPE, screens, masks, training etc.

We have recently introduced the Spring Back Programme offering up to £5k to businesses to invest in equipment, training, websites, payment systems and start ups to enable recovery on our high streets and surrounding areas.

We have agreed our Sustainability Strategy with a £500k budget showing our commitment of being carbon neutral by 2035.

Our new purpose built, temporary accommodation project in Elm Road, Thetford will see an investment of £1.8m offering advice and support to single adults, couples or families who find themselves in the most vulnerable of situations.

The first community supermarket was opened in the area with a £40k boost from Breckland. Working in partnership with the Norfolk Community Foundation support can be offered to those who the pandemic has hit the hardest.

Our Council took the decision to end the 10 year partnership arrangement with South Holland Council following the retirement of our Chief Executive and different ways of working brought upon us by Covid. This was an amicable decision by both parties and we are very much looking forward to the future.

We have continued to invest in our frontline services which includes the great work being undertaken by the fly tipping team, the recruitment of an animal welfare officer and offering online and evening appointments to our residents.

Our new waste contract went live in April after a very successful three - way partnership contract was agreed. This will see efficiency savings and benefits as well as the opportunity to offer a trade waste service.

Democracy has not been forgotten in the current climate. We have continued to hold our council business in the virtual world of Zoom. As part of our worksmart programme we have made the most of Elizabeth House being empty and carried out works to the council chamber which will allow livestreaming of meetings. The remaining workspace is being adapted to give officers and members some flexibility with their working arrangements including how we can meet the needs of our residents.

It is a real testament of the dedication of officers and members that whilst stepping up to a pandemic, addressing an Avian Flu outbreak, dealing with unexploded bombs etc that so much has been achieved in our programme of works.

If anyone should have any questions or would like to know more information please do get in touch.