

Parish Report – December 2020

Councillor

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Proposed biodiversity motion

At Full Council on the 3rd December, the LDGI Group proposed a biodiversity motion. If voted through, this motion will ensure:

- Delivery of an SCC biodiversity strategy.
- Assessment of how SCC can lead partner organisations in this field.
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options on SCC land.
- A letter to the Secretary of State calling for a clear and ambitious national biodiversity strategy.

Submitted response to Pavement Parking Consultation

Following the Government's announcement of a consultation on potential reforms to the law on pavement parking, my group has submitted a response supporting Option 3: a nationwide roll-out of a London-style ban on pavement parking.

CLlr Lindsay, the group's Spokesperson for Highways, Transport and Rural Issues, commented: "For too long the rules about parking on pavements have been an unnecessary grey area. People looking to park are confused whether it is better to block the roadway or the pavement and end up parking half on and half off pavements – the worst of both worlds."

Submitted response to Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on draft recommendations

My Group submitted a response to the LGBC consultation. The Group objected to the proposed reduction in councillor numbers, which makes little sense given Suffolk's growing population and the increase in councillor workload.

The Group also registered concern that the proposals from the boundary commission adhered too closely to suggestions received from the Conservative administration at the County Council. Some of the proposed division boundaries appear to divide traditionally non-Conservative communities and attach them to strongly Conservative areas. This means that the five council seats lost will largely impact non-Conservative councillors and increase the hegemony of the Conservative administration even further.

The proposed divisions will also destroy previous efforts in multiple areas to align County Council divisions with those of the District Councils.

Finally, the Group objected to multiple instances of cohesive communities are being divided and lumped into divisions with other towns and villages with which they are not closely connected.

OFSTED initial report on SCC's SEND services released

An initial report has been published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) looking into the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suffolk was one of eighteen local authorities taking part in the study to gather evidence to inform future national improvements for children and young people with SEND across Education, Health and Care.

The initial findings of the report suggest that SEND services were maintained during lockdown in Suffolk, and workers have increased collaboration and co-production. The stress level of young people and families had risen, but the County Council has established dedicated services to provide support, including distributing family support boxes to over 2000 families, and running a campaign called Back to School, aimed at helping SEND children transition back into school life.

Councillor Penny Otton, my Group's Spokesperson for Education, Children and Young People commented:

"I know that many families in Suffolk found the lockdown restrictions extremely difficult to cope with and struggled with isolation. Suffolk County Council's officers and social workers have done great work to improve the lives of children with special needs, especially during the lockdown period when those children and families were in the greatest need of support."

The findings of the initial report can be read here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/council-news/Area-SEND-Interim-visit-summary-note.pdf>

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families best wishes for the festive season in these very strange times.