

# Parish Report July 2012

## Councillor

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### Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, and covered two important items to the County, firstly on monitoring the quality of care in Suffolk, and secondly looking at public access to the County Council and ways in which it can be improved for the future. All recommendations below are unconfirmed;

#### Monitoring the quality of care in Suffolk –

- The committee discussed many aspects of how the County Council deals with monitoring the care provided in Suffolk. A number of witnesses from a variety of organisations providing care or helping to monitor care came along to discuss their views with the Councillors.
- Recommendations were made reflecting much of the discussions that had taken place. It was particularly evident that with so many agencies working with those who required care, there was not an easy method of sharing best practice. It was suggested that meetings involving all the agencies should be convened on a regular basis to ensure that everyone was able to identify issues that could be corrected, particularly those smaller ones.
- As you may have seen in the news, this scrutiny paper revealed that there were 11 Care home contracts suspended. The committee received the latest update on this matter (with the current figure standing at 9) and discussed ways in which people were informed of the contracts suspension (which tend to last around 3 or 4 months). A recommendation was made to help improve this system, which it appears that the adult safeguarding board had already been discussing, and will continue to do so.
- There was also an element of concern about the time it takes to contact the relevant officers through Customer First.

#### Public access –

- Methods of the current means of communication with the council were discussed in the afternoon session, it was also important to discuss future methods of communicating such as texting and applications for mobile devices.
- Many of the councillors agreed with the officer recommendations provided in the report; however they were not pleased with the recommendation that suggested discouraging contact via other channels than the public access team.
- It was also discussed how to improve public access to things such as safeguarding following the concerns raised in the item above.

The next meeting of the scrutiny committee will take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July.

### Cabinet

The next Cabinet meeting takes place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July at West Suffolk House. The meeting will begin at 11 o'clock and as usual public speakers are welcome at the beginning. On the agenda for the meeting will be

- 2011 – 12 Outturn for Revenue and Capital spending – providing an update on the County Councils finances and current spending
- Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme – considering the years operation of the scheme so far, after it was passed from the Districts to the County Council. It will also consider the motion by the Lib Dem Group, which suggested extending the hours for those eligible due to age from 9:30 to 9am, and removing all time limitations for those eligible due to disability.
- To consider proposals for revisions to the home to school transport policy for 2013-14.
- Future of back office requirements of Suffolk County Council.
- Annual report from the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board to the Children’s Trust Board.
- St Benedict’s School, Bury St. Edmunds – consider the statutory notices by the board of governors to change the schools age range from 13-18 to 11-18.

I will provide you with an update next month as to what decisions were made at this meeting. The reports for Cabinet will appear on this website when they are released - <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/>

### **Full Council**

The next Full Council meeting will take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. As usual members of the public are able to attend and ask questions to the portfolio holders. If you do wish to submit a question, please head to this address for more information - <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making/public-speaking-at-meetings/>

### **Flooding – are you prepared?**

Suffolk County Council have launched a consultation seeking views from both people and businesses about proposals to tackle local or flash flooding both now and in the future.

This will form part of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management plan, with the consultation lasting three months.

For more information about the consultation and the flood risk management plan, please head to <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making/consultations/flooding-are-you-prepared/>

### **Rising to the Challenge in Suffolk**

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are more than just about the sport this summer. As part of a wider celebration, the Cultural Olympiad will be taking place in Suffolk with a number of events celebrating the Olympics.

For more information please head to the link below to find out what is going on in your areas. <http://www.risingtothechallenge.org/culture>

### **Independent Commission to look at Education in Suffolk**

An independent commission was launched last week to look into the educational attainment, aspiration and employability In Suffolk.

As a result of Suffolk GCSE results lagging four percentage points below the national average, Matthew Taylor the CEO of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (RSA) and former prime ministerial advisor, has been tasked with improving educational attainment in Suffolk.

The commission which was launched at the recent ‘Raising the Bar’ conference will first work with the many delegates at the conference who pledged their help, with a significant amount of time spent working with employers in Suffolk and head teachers. It is expected that the commission will report back in May 2013, with a further conference focusing on Primary Schools to be held in November 2012.

## **Free Insulation for Suffolk Homes**

Launched at the Suffolk Show, Councils and businesses across Suffolk are working together to help provide free cavity wall and loft insulation to homes in Suffolk.

Although subject to survey, access and existing levels of insulation, this insulation offer is not dependant on income levels or age. However, there is a time limit - all applications must be received by 30 September 2012. To apply people can phone 0845 603 7686 or visit [www.greensuffolk.org/toast](http://www.greensuffolk.org/toast)

This is an opportunity for residents across the county to get their homes insulated before winter. Such initiatives can save home owners significant amounts on their fuel bills, with cavity wall insulation saving up to £135, and loft insulation saving £175.