

# Parish Report March 2013

## Councillor

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### Full Council Budget Meeting

The Full Council budget meeting took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, and as it is a special meeting, was solely for the purpose of discussing the budget.

As I have mentioned in the past, the administration submitted their budget aiming to cut £24.9m for this financial year. This included £7m from Adult and Community Services, and £2.5m from remodelling Children's services.

At the meeting, the Liberal Democrat Group submitted an amendment to the budget aiming to improve services in a number of different areas.

- £650,000 to School Improvement Services – to employ additional advisors that go into schools to provide guidance to help schools improve their level of attainment, which drastically needs improving in Suffolk.
- £475,000 for providing an additional 1900 days of supply work providing it is matched by school funds. This we believe would change attitudes, particularly if combined with county efforts to facilitate such cross school working. It might solve the problem where experts from successful schools just can't make time available to help.
- £300,000 to help Suffolk County Council commit to a pilot scheme that would increase the number of foster carers for the most vulnerable children in Suffolk.
- £300,000 to respond to local community requests for 20mph zones in Suffolk towns and villages.

The Lib Dems stated that this additional funding would help improve attainment in Suffolk, care for those vulnerable children and improve localism after the speed limits team in Suffolk was disbanded.

The Liberal Democrat amendment was eventually defeated with the administrations budget being voted through by 39 votes to 11.

### February Cabinet

The February Cabinet, which took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>, contained a number of significant issues for residents across the County. The main issues that were discussed and agreed are below;

- As mentioned below, the Cabinet agreed to abolish middle schools in the Stowmarket and Stowupland areas.
- Review of the outcomes of school attainment in Suffolk
- East Anglia ONE Offshore windfarm – a response to the consultation of this application which will see a significant section of the power cables from the windfarm come ashore and be buried underground travelling from Felixstowe to Bramford.
- Ipswich Northern Fringe Supplementary Planning Document – this is a response to Ipswich Borough Councils report on the potential housing development to the north of Ipswich.

- Procurement of Highways Services – the Cabinet agreed to allow officers to negotiate extensions to the current highways contract, (until the 30<sup>th</sup> September), and proceed with awarding a new highways contract to the joint venture between May Gurney & WSP UK Ltd which will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.
- Suffolk Customer Services Model: Post 2014 – agree to bring the Councils customer service function back into the Council (from CSD) as of May 2014. This includes public access and Customer First functions.
- Suffolk Growth Strategy – the Cabinet was asked to endorse the Suffolk Growth Strategy, a joint economic growth strategy developed by the county, district and borough councils in Suffolk.

For all the items and more information on each of these papers, please head to - <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=26/Feb/2013&c=The%20Cabinet>

#### **Stowmarket and Stowupland SOR – Lib Dem Call-in rejected**

You will be aware that the County Council's Cabinet made the decision on Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of February to abolish the middle schools in Stowmarket and Stowupland.

However, the Liberal Democrat Group attempted to get the decision called into the Scrutiny Committee as they felt the justification for making this decision was flawed. Of particular issue was the lack of funding to provide top class schools in this area, as the plans will see a split site school created in Stowmarket. They also highlighted the contrasting statistics provided by the Council and the campaign group, as well as issues over safety.

The call in was rejected on the grounds that the Cabinet had all the required information to hand, which means the decision has now been approved. The Lib Dem group are disappointed that an opportunity to look again at such a large issue to which so many parents and pupils feel passionately about has been refused.

#### **What happens to your recycled items?**

The Suffolk Waste Partnership has produced a very interesting document, which highlights what happens to the waste that we recycle here in Suffolk. This PDF includes information about how many tonnes of waste are recycled in each category, where the waste ends up, and the fact that as a County we recycle 53.2% of our waste.

<http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Recycling/Where-It-Goes/2011-12-End-Destination-Register-v5.pdf>

#### **School Meals in Suffolk**

The catering provider to schools in Suffolk, EATS, has provided assurance that the meat provided in its schools does not contain any horsemeat.

The vast majority of meals provided for children in Suffolk schools, are created in house, and beef used by EATS is of assured food standard (Red Tractor accredited). The red tractor logo is a guarantee of both quality and origin.

#### **Scrutiny Committee to look at Raising the Bar and support for young people**

The S.C.C Scrutiny committee are going to be focusing on two items this month, with both raising the bar, and considering the progress of the divestment of youth services which took place as part of the 2011 budget cuts.

If you would like a look at the reports heading to Scrutiny on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, please head here - <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=11/Mar/2013&c=Scrutiny%20Committee>