

Parish Report June 2018

Councillor

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Overwhelming public opposition to Suffolk County Council's school transport plans

Leaked documents from Suffolk County Council show overwhelming public opposition to proposed school transport changes. Of the 3600 responses to Suffolk County Council's home-to-school transport consultation, 85% "strongly oppose" the proposals and a further 5% "oppose" them. This is the most responses received by a Consultation in recent years, and it is clear that parents, teachers and communities have very serious concerns about the proposals.

The Cabinet is due to make a decision on changing the school transport policy on Tuesday 19 June. I, along with my Group, have opposed the proposed changes since they were first announced in September and we will continue to raise our concerns at the Cabinet meeting.

New Council Leader elected

Following a leadership challenge in the Conservative Group at the Council, Cllr Matthew Hicks has been elected as the new Leader of Suffolk County Council, replacing Cllr Colin Noble. His Deputy will be Cllr Mary Evans, the former Chair of Scrutiny.

Cllr Hicks has promised a "new era" of politics at the Council, with a focus on mutual respect, collaboration and co-operation. We are hopeful that he will be more open to working with, and listening to, councillors from other parties.

The first major change has been the removal of Cabinet Committees, which were only established in September 2017. They will be replaced by Policy Development Panels, although we do not currently have the full details on how these will operate.

'Outstanding' schools in Suffolk have not had Ofsted inspections for years

The National Audit Office has revealed that over 1600 schools in the UK have not been inspected by Ofsted for 6+ years. In Suffolk, 23 outstanding schools - almost half of those rated 'outstanding' - have not been inspected for at least 6 years. For 6 of these schools, their last inspection was over a decade ago. This means that whole cohorts of students have gone through school without a single Ofsted inspection.

As Spokesperson for Education from the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group, I raised the issue and my concerns at a Council meeting on 24 May. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Gordon Jones, assured me that he shared my concerns and would raise it with the head of Ofsted.

MID SUFFOLK; A VISION FOR STOWMARKET will go out for consultation, but the council will agree to put money into the work and for Needham Market and Eye to help regenerate the high streets.

DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK; as part of the response the council agreed to support the idea to be able to impose a condition that development should take place within 2 years, thus avoiding land banking. Also to use Brown field sites where appropriate and would not have a detrimental effect on amenities.

A review of the councils in-house building maintenance team is taking place .

FLY TIPPING; although 72 cases have been reported ia have asked this be broken down into how many of those actually resulted in prosecution or further action.