

Parish Report - June 2019

Councillor

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New leadership team for LDGI Group

I am pleased to have been elected as Leader for 2019/20 by my political group at Suffolk County Council, made up of Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent (LDGI) councillors. My deputy leader is Cllr Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw (Green).

Ofsted rates Suffolk County Council Children's Services "outstanding"

After a week-long inspection in April, Ofsted have given Suffolk County Council Children's Services an "outstanding" rating, an improvement from the previous rating of "good" in 2015. Suffolk County Council is one of only seven in the country to achieve this rating, and the positive report is testament to the hard-working frontline staff at the council.

However, the council does still struggle to fill social worker vacancies, particularly given it does not pay social workers as much as some neighbouring councils

Furthermore, this is in stark contrast to the inspection of Suffolk SEND services earlier this year, which Ofsted rated "inadequate".

Rise in the numbers of care-leavers housed in unregulated accommodation

BBC Newsnight has reported a large rise in the number of care-leavers being housed in unregulated accommodation, the figures for Suffolk were the fourth largest of all English authorities. Children in care may move to supported accommodation once they are over the age of 16, to encourage independent living.

Poverty motion voted down by Council

At the Council AGM on 23 May, I proposed a motion asking the Council to acknowledge the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty following his visit to the UK in November last year, and to set-up a cross-party policy develop group tasked with investigating actions that Suffolk County Council could take to reduce poverty in the county. Unfortunately, the Conservative administration decided to vote against the motion.

Suffolk has not escaped the national crisis: earlier this month, End Child Poverty published its 2019 statistics (28.5%) in Suffolk are being brought up in poverty.

New system for funding sponsored bus services

A new system has been agreed for allocating funding to sponsored bus services, following a cross-party policy development panel (PDP).

In the past, decisions on allocating funding were made on subsidy per passenger figures and on the recommendations of officers within the Passenger Transport Unit, with no formal scoring. The new system devised by the PDP sets out a defined methodology for allocating resources, to ensure this process is consistent and transparent. Factors that will be taken into account include:

1. Average single passenger journeys per day of operation
2. Percentage of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme journeys for both age related and disabled passengers
3. Number of entitled students on bus route (additional weighting of 1.5)
4. Type of service, days operated and consideration of alternative services
5. Integration with bus services that operate on a commercial basis
6. Average cost per passenger journey

Restrictions on recycling

The amount of goods that can be recycled in Suffolk has reduced, with Tetra Pak cartons and metal items such as pots and pans no longer being accepted in recycling bins. This decision was made by the Suffolk Waste Partnership following a refurbishment of the Material Recycling Facility near Great Blakenham, because the new sorting equipment that is being installed will not be able to separate out cartons.

Cartons and metal items will now need to be taken to household recycling centres. These will now be open until 7pm on Thursdays from May to August.

A14; proposed works over the next few weeks; hopefully you have had details?

MID SUFFOLK

Following the elections, Tory, green and Lib Dem group leaders have had a discussion as to the allocation of cabinet places and chairs of committees. Unfortunately, no agreement, (despite the number of other groups being half of the council) could be found so the cabinet will be solely Conservative and Independent members as are all committee chairs. All decision made by the chairs casting vote. The new leader is Cllr Suzie Morley.

PLANNING; the rules on bigger single storey extensions has been made permanent; although they must inform the council who will then contact neighbours who can object.

MID SUFFOLK PCSO. Melanie Yolland has been appointed as a first case contact and a proforma available for Cllrs to report incidences.