

Parish Report - July 2019

Councillor

Penny Otton

Meadowside
High Street
Rattlesden, Bury St Edmunds
IP30 0RA

Telephone: 07545423847

Email: penny.otton@suffolk.gov.uk



Suffolk County Council announces funding cuts to subsidised bus routes

Suffolk County Council has announced that 23 subsidised bus routes will no longer receive funding from the council, in a bid to save £340,000. The decision was made in February I spoke against this cut at the time, as well as other cuts that will affect bus users such as the decision to no longer print bus timetables. More details of which routes will be affected can be found at:

<http://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

I have sent the list to all parish councils

The council say that they will be engaging with bus operators to determine whether the routes can continue to run without council funding. I will keep you updated if there are any further developments. If you have concerned residents please let me know.

Cross-party call for independent inquiry into SEND services

On 14 June I signed a cross-party letter to the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, asking her to establish an independent inquiry into the provision of SEND services in Suffolk.

This follows the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission reinspection earlier this year, when Suffolk County Council's SEND services were deemed to have made insufficient improvement.

Reports that health visitor numbers will be cut

It was reported in the Guardian and Observer that Suffolk County Council is planning to dramatically reduce the number of health visitors in Suffolk in order to make savings.

These plans have not been shared with councillors or the public yet, however the media claim to have seen internal SCC documents showing that the number of health visitors will be reduced by 25% through redundancies in order to save £1m. Health visitors would also have a reduced workload and only focus on the most vulnerable families, rather than all families in Suffolk. The rest of their current workload would need to be picked up by nurses or social workers.

Final Council overspend on 2018-19 budget

The final outturn figures for the 2018-19 budget have been published, showing that Suffolk County Council overspent by £4.5m (0.88% of the budget). Key areas of overspend included:

- Home to School Transport (£1.7m), due to the increasing demand for out-of-county SEND transport arrangements;
- Adult Care Purchasing Budget (£4m);
- Early Help and Specialist Services (£4.8m), due to the increasing number of children in care, especially those requiring specialist placements.

SCC releases breakdown of Upper Orwell Crossing spend

The final costs of the abandoned Upper Orwell Crossings project have been released, and show that Suffolk County Council spent a total of £8.1m before deciding to not build the Crossings. Of this, over £4m was paid in fees to consultants.

More detail can be found at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-transport-and-transport-planning/Upper-Orwell-Crossing-Final-Report-on-Project-Costs.pdf>

SCC misses children's care plan targets in 75% of cases

The Department for Education has published figures showing that Suffolk County Council exceeded the legal time limit of 20 weeks for issuing new education, health and care plans (EHCPs) in 75% of cases in 2018. This means that hundreds of children were left waiting for the appropriate support and is a significant increase compared to 2017, when 53% of cases went beyond the legal time limit.

MID SUFFOLK; the full council on 27th June agreed to publish the draft Local Plan. This is the opportunity for you and the public to comment; The draft shows 2 areas of Drinkstone as HAMLETS.

HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN; as the council had only achieved 80% of required housing it now has to have a plan!!

BIN COLLECTIONS; some the days will be changed. I have asked that all those effected get a notice of any new days.