

Parish Report – January 2021

Councillor

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Wishing you All a Happy New Year

Biodiversity strategy adopted

At Full Council on the 3rd December, Suffolk County Council unanimously passed a motion that will see Suffolk County Council developing a biodiversity strategy and embracing biodiverse land management practices. The motion was proposed by the LDGI Group and supported by all other groups. The motion will ensure:

- Delivery of a biodiversity strategy that will set out how we could increase Suffolk's biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations.
- Assessment of how the council can lead organisations across the county in efforts to improve biodiversity.
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options on council land.
- A letter to the Secretary of State asking what further support can be made available to local authorities to enhance bio diversity within their areas.

Resisting the decision to reclaim local highways budgets

The Suffolk County Council cabinet will be reclaiming unspent Local Highways Budgets from councillors on the 31st of December. Local highways budgets can be spent by councillors in their divisions, on projects like new yellow lines, resident parking areas or zebra crossings. The LDGI Group has fought against this decision, arguing that the pandemic has increased delays to work which was already difficult to complete due to cumbersome processes and excessive red tape. Lockdown meant that officers weren't allowed to go out and look at sites, and teams were overwhelmed by the amount of work caused by the pandemic. Some larger projects will not be ready to receive payment by the 31st. This reclaiming of the budget would not have become absolutely necessary until March, when the financial year ends.

Our Group has been fighting against this decision, taking it to Cabinet and senior officers, as well as the press. This decision means that dozens of projects will now remain unfinished and local communities will not benefit from the money.

Preparing budget amendments for 2021-22 budget

SCC is currently preparing its budget for 2021-22 and the LDGI Group has been preparing its amendments. My Group has chosen three key priorities for our budget amendment: Warm homes, Supporting community groups and charities through the pandemic, and Income generation & the climate emergency. We will be proposing multiple projects and policy decisions around these three key themes.

Consultation on the Street Guide

SCC is currently running a consultation on its proposed Streets Guide, which will assist with the design of new residential developments showing how best to create sustainable transport

layouts that promote walking and cycling. A new Street Guide has been commissioned to update guidance for residential streets. Comments on the draft guide are welcomed and there is a survey to complete. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10th February 2021.

Link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>

Consultation on the Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan

SCC is currently running a consultation on the Suffolk Climate Action Plan. and you are invited to comment on the following areas:

- Sustainable Buildings
- Large Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Transport & Air Quality
- Small Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Energy & Planning
- Community Action & Schemes

Link and further information here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/initiatives/pledge-to-climate-emergency-declaration/>